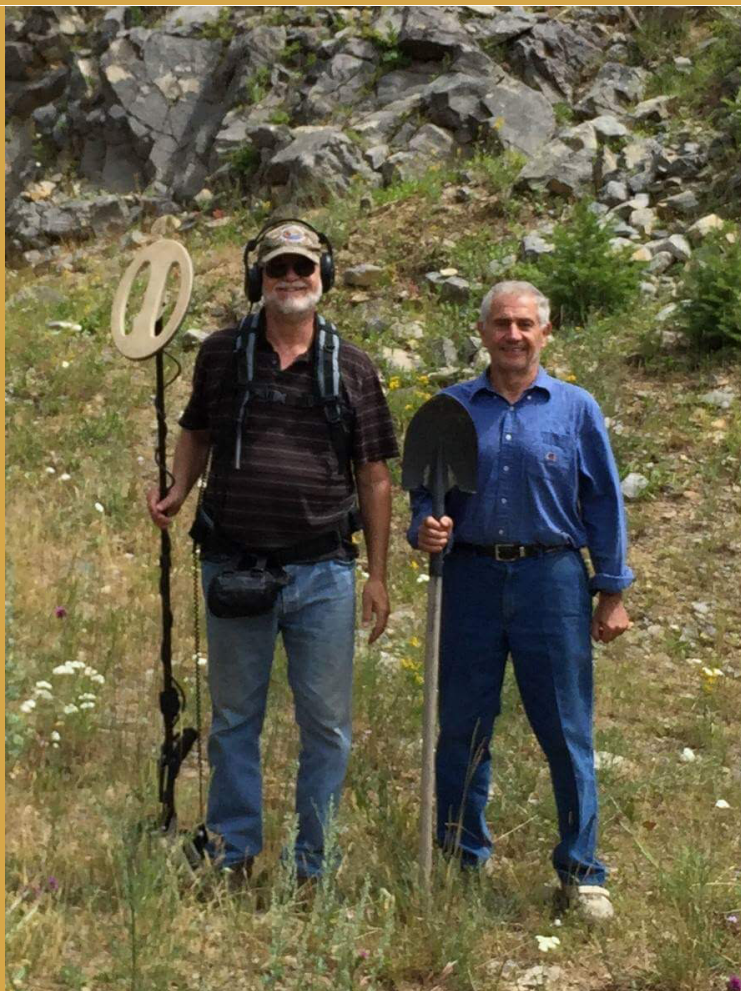


THE BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

NEWSLETTER OF THE HOUSTON GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY



FEATURED MEMBER: WILL HEIERMAN

Will Heierman with Chuck Pharis of "Gold Fever" reality show at the EHK Mine

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

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

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

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

Library Information: <https://hgms.org/education/libraries/>

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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 FOR MAY

by Nancy English

There is nothing like a clean house! The fresh smell of sanitized surfaces, clean porcelain, vacuumed and mopped floors welcomed us to the April 26 General Meeting. The Board hired C & S Janitorial to clean the main hall, kitchen, restrooms, office, and library once a week. Check out the April 26 General Meeting minutes to see all the members who helped make the initial cleaning happen.

Now, all we have to do is pick up after ourselves to leave uncluttered spaces to be cleaned. I am very impressed by the spirit of teamwork from our members! Every Friday Shaza will clean the club. Let me know at President@hgms.org if you have any comments about the Clubhouse cleaning. Speaking of the General Meeting, on the fourth Tuesdays of each month in 2022, we have enjoyed four well-presented, informative, interesting programs.

In January, Neal Immega provided a review of the Agate Expo in Austin via PowerPoint. He gave lessons on different types of agates and the locations where agates are found.

Emma Heitmann presented her program via Zoom in February: High or Low? The Uplift History of the Colorado Plateau. Her talk was saturated with the details of the geological formations and the events that caused them.

In March, Sarah Metsa gave us a fascinating virtual walkthrough of the Grotto in Dickeyville, Wisconsin; made even more interesting because of her personal experiences there.

And just last week Will Heiermann shared photos and stories about his EHK Mine in Montana. He brought samples of his collections. We also had a silent auction of twenty-seven pieces of donated equipment and tools.

So far, my commitment to a short business meeting gives us more time for the programs. If you have not been to a General Meeting lately, then I encourage you to check us out on May 24. The program will be announced in an upcoming Sunday e-Blast.

My husband Tom and I attended the Paleo Section meeting last week. Neal did an innovative presentation titled When Did We Become Intelligent? It led to a provocative discussion about the jumps in human intellect.

Sunday, May 8, brings Mother's Day and more motivation to make authentic jewelry for the moms in our lives. Happy Mothers' Day to all the mothers in our club!

I always take a chance to promote the Day Light Section, where we finish small jewelry projects in our two-hour meetings on the first Wednesday of the month, which is on the 4th of May this month. Nancy Searle has scheduled all the programs for 2022. You can find them listed on <https://hgms.org/events> in the Day Light Section.

The Lapidary Section meetings on the third Monday of the month provide lapidary and silversmithing projects with shop time to produce unique jewelry.

Sharon Halton just finished teaching a cabochon-making class. She is teaching another one on May 9 and 11. And Tony Lucci is producing a five-session Casting class starting May 3rd. See

[.f](#)

Your HGMS membership provides so many ways to learn and create.

My granddaughter is graduating from Taylor High School this month. She joined the Youth Section in 2018 long enough to make a cabochon, win 1st Place at the HGMS Annual Show, learn to wire wrap it, and give it to her mom.

In August she leaves for Texas State University to get a teaching degree. I am so proud of her. Congratulations to all the Grads in your lives!

VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Sarah Metsa

Wow! "The EHK Mine" presented by HGMS Member Will Heierman at our April meeting was fantastic! The EHK Mine, placer gold claims in the Helena National Forest owned by Will Heierman and two partners, has produced some gorgeous specimens, and Will also exhibited some sapphire crystals and faceted stones. It was a memorable talk!

I hope that our next Hybrid/In Person General Meeting on Tuesday, May 24, 2022, 7:30 p.m. (which I am working on) will be as memorable.

UPCOMING SHOWS

Texas Mineral and Fossil Show Dallas and Plano
Fri, May 20 – Sun, May 22
Plano Event Center, 2000 E Spring Creek Pkwy
Plano, TX

Gem Mineral Fossil Jewelry & Bead Show
Sat, May 28 – Sun, May 29
Will Rogers Memorial Center, 3401 W Lancaster Ave
Fort Worth, TX

SECTION REPORTS

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

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

NEXT MEETING will be on Saturday, May 24th at 12:30 PM at the Clubhouse. We will learn to make a leather Celtic knot bracelet with metal components. The material cost for this project will be between \$15 and \$20 dollars, and RSVPs are required by April 30th for the class so that we can purchase the materials in time for this class. RSVP to Beading@HGMS.org. You may also work independently on a beading project of your own.

Bring your beading mat, scissors, wire and wire cutter, round nose and needle nose pliers, thread and beading needles (if you have them) to our next meeting.

Here is an opportunity: 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)

May 4, 2022: Learn to use tools in the HGMS Shop with Neal Immega. No charge!

GEMSTONES AND FACETING (2ND THURSDAY AT 6:30 PM IN PERSON AND VIA ZOOM)

At our May 12th meeting we will go over Preshaping and how to identify what you are looking for when picking gems. We've had several people ask this question and it's a good "how to get started question." As usual, I will keep the conversation open so the input of experience is appreciated!

The videos for the May 12th meeting are:

How to Cut a Hydrothermal Emerald - Faceting Apprentice Sampler Course
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcdrlz6o0Qs>

Learn to Facet (cut) Gems - Lesson 1 - Dopping the Stone and Preforming
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3jRVBvfglzc>

Update on inventory progress: We have gotten a lot of the closets gone through and almost done. There's a load of Laps left to do and only one cabinet left to go through. Pat has been adding leveling feed to the machines and noticed a few of the bases wood has started to split and degrade. We'll be replacing those at some point but for now, we will be getting the kits together next. Randy has put together a list of items that should be in the kits so they should be together pretty soon.

Having members at the club house and joining us via zoom has been a great success and we have been able to include members that haven't been to a meeting in a very long time and invited a number of guests that wouldn't have been able to make it otherwise. The new chair, LT Wilcox, is attempting to up our tech game and has plans for some interest-

ing advancements to get more people engaging in group activities.

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

May 16, 2022 – Learn to make your own stamping tools. Steel will be provided. If you have diamond bits or cut off wheels that fit a dremel or flexshaft, please bring them.

June 20, 2022 – Tony Lucci will share tips and tricks for cutting turquoise. He will provide practice material. Participants are encouraged to bring their own material and get tips on deciding whether the material needs to be stabilized and how to best work with it on their own.

In April, we completed grinding down the carved obsidian that we inlaid with crushed abalone shell in March.

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

At our May 18th meeting, the first topic of discussion will be the Texas Mineral and Fossil Show held in April in Conroe. The presentation will be "Colorado Rhodochrosites".

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

The next meeting is May 17th. The program will be on Mazon Creek, Illinois fossils; Plants and Animals preserved in siderite nodules including my favorite - the Tully Monster! I am going to give all people who come in several nice specimens of fern fossils. I got them in a donation and kept them away from Michele's sales area by saying - Paleo specimens belong to Paleo - and she believed me!!!! I will have a program on the fossilization process.

The April Paleo Meeting was on the development of intelligence and which animals can pass the mirror test.

Paleo Success! Mammoth bone found in the Brazos River - I am trying to get the finder to come to a paleo meeting and tell us about it.



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

LIBRARY:

The main (Mineral) library spreadsheet has been updated, and we have added a new resource, a spreadsheet of all our periodicals, thanks to Clyde McMeans. You can study these spreadsheets or download them from <https://hgms.org/education/libraries/>.

The Library computer is getting a 1 TB solid state disk to improve its speed. Thanks,

Logan.

BOOK REVIEW:

A New/Old book: The Dechronization of Sam Magruder (1996) by George Gaylord Simpson with a forward by Arthur C. Clarke and an afterward by Stephen Jay Gould.

Simpson was the #1 paleontologist in the 1940s and 50s and he apparently wrote this short science fiction time travel story about a man to travels to the Cretaceous, without the intention of publishing it. When he died, the family and friends sorted his papers to distribute them to places like Harvard. A few boxes of things that they could not figure out were given to his daughter and she found this manuscript. With bulldog determination she asked Gould who had been one of Simpson's students, a professor at Harvard, and a noted author popularizing paleontology and science in the pages of the Natural History magazine, to write a piece about the story, and he did!! Even better, she got Clarke, science fiction author extraordinaire to also write a piece, and he did!

The oddest thing about this book is that I could only get it from the Beaumont library - not Harris County and not Houston. I bought a couple of copies through Amazon for our library for less than \$10 total. They will be on the library table for you to check out. Check it out and I will give you a fossil. Actually, I will give you a great Penn fern fossil at the next Paleo meeting, no matter what. I will naturally catalog this book in the Paleo section because most of the Paleo dinosaur books are pure fiction anyway.

SAW REPAIRS:

The broken rock clamp of the Frantom 18" slab saw has been repaired. It was broken by an over enthusiastic shop user who thought the rule was to get the rock clamped as tight as possible vs getting it clamped ENOUGH. The steel plate is from a used up supergrinder blade. The rock clamp has been rebuilt, and installed using bailing wire and chewing gum to stick it back together. Look for an article on this in an upcoming BBG. Try not to over tighten rocks and break it again.

Improvements to Texaco - We have had a problem with people over-tightening the rock clamp on Texaco possibly because the wrench is too long. The over-tightening strips the threads off the bolt. I will install a Grade 8 bolt, which is more than twice as strong as the common bolts that I buy from Lowes.

I have also bought a Stubby wrench with a ratchet end to make it more convenient to tighten the bolt. I hope the sludge does not gum up the ratchet. It is also much shorter to reduce the amount of torque that over eager users can apply, and will tie it on so it does not get lost in the sludge. Remember - use WEDGES on the rock and tighten until the rock does not move, or glue the rock to a board, using white glue and a warm oven or



Fixing the rock clamp with a steel plate

crook pot to cure it.

The 18" Highland Park saw was reported to cut only 2 inches. I checked it on Saturday and found that the chain was tangled in the shut-off switch. It was cutting 2 inches because that is all the chain setting would allow.

I switched out the chain to one with a smaller link that might not get tangled as easily. However, it is up to the user to OBSERVE the shut-off switch and the chain.

Now I can work on getting the Dr. Rock saw back in operation. The problem has to do with tensioning the saw blade. I have not been very successful in doing it.

PLUMBING REPAIRS:

The toilets have gotten attention this week. I suspect that the new cleaners bumped the fill pipe in the men's room and it leaked. I replaced the solid copper pipe with a braided pipe - which is much easier to install.

I fixed the ladies toilet on Saturday Shop Day. The ladies complained that their toilet kept running and that turned out to be caused by the chain being hooked on the flush arm 2 inches too long.

AIR ABRASIVE ROOM REPAIRS:

I decided that the air abrasive needs to have the desiccant replaced. The stuff is pre-Covid. I have taken the reserve beads home to dry them in my garage. The dryer tower is actually a steel diesel oil filter housing that holds 1.5 gallons of beads. It needs to be strong to handle the 90 pounds of air pressure.

I replaced the beads and then the hoses kept popping off. I never did get it fixed. I will buy some new hose and try again. Rats - no good deed goes unpunished.

You know me - easy going to a fault, but I just found out that the little black hose things that control the abrasive flow have DOUBLED in price. What is the world coming to? Lots of repair parts have been ordered and are still being delivered. The old amber colored tubing is crumbling as if it has been oxidized. It certainly needs replacement. The whole machine looks like it was designed to be a repairman's meal ticket, just like the AMC car my dad had, always in the shop.

FOR YOUR LAUNDRY:

For some unknown reason, my wife has been a little critical of my odor after I have been cleaning saws. It is not me actually, but my clothes, really. Two washings with All do not remove the odor. I noticed today that O' Reilly Auto Parts store carries a laundry detergent for mechanics called Fast Orange Grease-X, for \$16/40 ozs. In the interests of family harmony I tried it out and it really works. Keep this in mind if you are being unfairly hounded by your significant other.

UNUSUAL RING PROJECT:

I have been watching Bob Hill make this 18 kt gold ring with a stone just held by the tension in the metal and wanted you all to see it. I am considerably impressed by Bob' ability to over-



come all difficulties, not the least of which was sand casting a square rod of metal when he could not buy the right size. I am delighted that Bob is making good use of the metal shop.

SHOP VISITORS:

Finally we had a visitor who did not have a meteorite, just a granite boulder as big as your head, and they believed me when I told them what it was. I even talked them out of cutting it. I know, some shop foreman who does not want people to cut their rock.

A different visitor brought in a lovely amber colored BIG chunk the size of his head. He wanted to know if it was amber. We did a flame test on a chip and it turned out to be industrial plastic. Too bad. It is a lovely piece. If I owned it, it would be put in my window.

Oil for your own saw - remember that I have oil to sell at \$13/gallon. Bring your own container. Ask for help.

Ask for training on the TIG Welder! It is particularly good for jewelry repair. You can weld a piece while stones are in place.

FEATURED MEMBER: WILL HEIERMAN

How does a math professor become one of the premier collectors of a particular mineral species and an artisanal miner in Montana? In the case of Will Heierman, it was the desire to do something outside in the wilderness during his summers off from school duties. He attended Georgia Tech from 1960 to 1965, yes, a five year span, because he was on the gymnastics team, lettering 3 times in varsity, which let him keep his eligibility and become captain of the team. He graded papers for the Georgia Tech Math Department upon entry until he became their first undergraduate teaching assistant during his fourth and fifth years.

He was also a dorm counselor and supervisor of the jock study hall (where scholarship athletes with academic problems had to bury their noses in books every evening). He also worked in the campus library for the first three years, and during the last year he worked the Science/Technology desk and closed the building at night. He received a B.S. in Applied Mathematics with Highest Honor, with enough graduate math credits for two master's degrees.

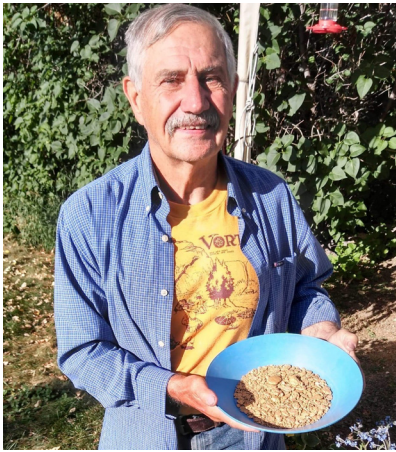
After graduation, he received a National Science Foundation graduate fellowship which allowed him to attend the Courant Institute, which is located a couple of blocks south of Washington Square Park in Greenwich Village, from 1965-1969. He received a master's in mathematics at NYU. Mathematical research has remained an interest throughout his career.

During that time, he lived in Greenwich Village for 4 years. His group of friends would go out once a month, pick a country and then go out to a restaurant representing that country. Even back then New York City had incredible diversity. He played pickup volleyball with friends and played in tournaments with the West Side YMCA team, which was a powerhouse in the East. They came in as high as fifth in the National AAU's in the early 70's.

For those four years, he lived in a co-ed graduate dorm on the south side of the park. He

met his first wife, also a resident, there. They were married in Hawaii after they graduated (unfortunately the marriage only lasted 6 years) and afterward returning to the mainland he taught at Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn from 1969 to 1998. He also had pet birds, macaws, and trained birds, and had a bird store for a while. In 1998, he retired and came to Texas to assist his father with some legal issues.

How did he get into rockhounding? After a few years of teaching mathematics, he wanted to get out of the city and spend summers in the woods. He met a friend who worked for Malone Oil back in 1979 when he was on sabbatical. The man had purchased mineral claims in Montana and they talked about beginning small-scale mining. Of course, Will had dreams of getting rich but that is not how it turned out. At that time, it was called the Utopia Mine, but later they refilled the claims, and it was renamed the EHK Mine. The first year, he ran a magnetometer survey, and they began mining the next summer. He learned panning for gold; he would scoop up wheelbarrows full of dirt and push them to a stream a thousand feet away.



Will with nuggets and a mustache

That first wheelbarrow load showed no color, but the second yielded a 1/3-ounce nugget. Possibly because the soil on the EHK Mine claim is glacial gravel, there are no fines (flour gold) present, only larger pieces, and possibly because the lode sources produced large crystals and leaves rather than finely disseminated colors. Big enough to ping with a metal detector!

Will presented a talk for HGMS' General Meeting on April 26th showing how he and his friends worked and the fruits of their labors. He also covered the bureaucratic hoops they had to jump through (some quite ironic) in order to pursue their passions on the EHK in the St. Helena National Forest.



Working at the Mine



A large single nugget

His partners were Amos Knaps-tad, Dave Edden, and Will (hence the initials EHK) but Dave's wife Gloria became a partner after her husband passed on. Originally the EHK was a hand tools-only oper-



Montana Sapphire: Heierman photo

He helped sink their shaft (drill, blast, muck) and clean their wash plant for two seasons.

That is an ongoing soap opera which he hopes to report on after the summer. Will is now well known for his collection but has sold a great number of his specimens, except those he keeps for display. He recently exhibited these at the Texas Mineral and Fossil Show in Conroe, Texas.

And at the end of every summer, it was back to work. After retiring he wanted to return to teaching. He taught Developmental Math at Central Texas College for a year and then for another year as a PACE (Program for Afloat College Education) Instructor for the Navy. He was in charge of the college experience: selling the textbooks, teaching math and sometimes English, and whatever else the college required.

ation but beginning in 2019 they used an excavator and metal detector in a “scrape and shoot” project to move more dirt to search for nuggets until the top of the pay streak was reached. Now it is back to hand tools and prospecting for more.

Will's interest in sapphires started when he saw some colorful faceted stones in a Helena gift shop. That is when he began his collection of corundum crystals. The owner invited him to visit the Yogo mines and that is where he met the owners of the two competing properties and cast his lot with Vortex Mining.



Ruby and Sapphire pseudomorph after Spinel: Burma specimen



Pakistan Sapphire: Heierman photo

He devised a means of making the basic English course more interesting and relevant which was later used by other instructors. He knew the purpose was to teach the seamen in his class how to formulate reports, not how to parse sentences, which is what the boring text was about.

The average passing rate was about 50%, but 17 of his 18 students passed to the delight of the officers! In 2001 he accepted a full-time position at Wharton County Junior College in Richmond, from which he retired again in 2015.

At Wharton County Junior College, one of his favorite stories is about a class that complained



Ruby-encrusted painite from Burma

You must think through a problem - just being able to calculate quickly will not necessarily get you the right answer.

He started at Wharton County Junior College just before 911 and was there for 14 years. He also met his second wife Herminia; his barber was her hairdresser and told him he should give her a call. Things worked out and they are still married, and he helped raise her two kids. His EHK Mine partner Gloria was in her second marriage – her two kids and his two kids lived with them and worked on the mine together in the summers.

he would not allow the use of a calculator to do arithmetic in his College Algebra course. He told the students to bring their calculators the next day, and Will brought a few problems for which process selection rather than arithmetic was the difficulty.

One of the questions was: "How many inches are there in 36 feet?" One student asked: "Do you multiply or divide by 12?" After the laughter subsided, he asked the student if more smaller or more bigger units would be needed to measure the distance, and which process creates larger numbers? She responded: "Oh, you multiply by 12!" It was a teaching moment for all in the class: think carefully, and you can answer many of your own questions!

There's a bad joke about that: We know light travels faster than sound, because some people appear bright until you hear them speak!

Another question was: "How many seconds were there in the year 1900?" That led to a discussion and homework to determine the full pattern of the 400-year Gregorian calendar cycle which has only 97 leap years! Years not divisible by 4 and ending in two zeros were not leap years.



Cowee Valley Ruby from North Carolina

Will has also worked with the owners of the Cherokee Ruby Mine located on Taylor Creek in the Cowee valley in North Carolina and owned by the Montoya family. He got to run the mine one day, when the matriarch, Maria Montoya, went to see her granddaughter graduate from school in Georgia. He observed the excavation of tourist gravels on a couple occasions. Visitors can buy and jig out buckets at a nearby flume site. That mine is reopening and he will meet with the new owners on June 1st this year.

During a sabbatical, Will also spent 10-1/2 months managing a gold mining concession in Ghana (nee The Gold Coast). It was a unique and wonderful experience, sharing knowledge of our culture and teaching them how to benefit from the great wealth all around them.



This 18 lb. Indian ruby is about the size of a football. Will acquired it from KC Pandy of Superb Minerals of India. Pandy joked that it was God's first model for Adam which (fortunately) he discarded.

In addition to his collecting and mining activities, Will has been very interested in video technology.

In the photograph at left, Will is holding the original artwork for the RCA "Indian Head Test Pattern" that was copied for broadcast by stations around the world for about twenty years.



Will holding original art work for the test pattern with old video cameras in background



Enlargement of the original artwork

The image was used to recalibrate nightly the early cameras and transmitters (which used vacuum tubes that deteriorated as their hot filaments evaporated). Older readers may remember this test pattern from black and white TV sets from the 1950's. In the background is some of the video equipment he has collected. The framed artwork is now on display with a signal generator, monoscope tube, and copper plate bearing the image in the Texas Broadcast Museum in Kilgore, Texas.

The cover photo for this article shows Chuck Pharis and Will on the EHK mine; Chuck is a noted collector of TV memorabilia and a gold fever victim. He was the cameraman for many episodes of the original "Gold Fever" reality show, where he and Tom Massie ran around Nome, Alaska and Mother Lode Country in California. Will got his gold collection and the original Indian Head Test Pattern artworks from him (not cheap)! There are actually three artworks - the drawing, the first assemblage, and the master which was reproduced all over the World until color TV (and the SMPTE color bars) made it obsolete. For more information and some real eye candy, visit [Corunduminium.com](http://www.corunduminium.com) – Will plans to update the site this fall after the mining season, but it is still a resource for the corundum collecting community, for the specimen photographs and locality descriptions. The website largely documents an historical collection: many of the specimens shown have been sold.

Besides the many fantastic photographs of rubies and sapphires, check out some of the documentation and stories of fabulous collecting trips:

- <http://www.corunduminium.com/BLOGS.htm> "Our Gold Mine"
- <http://www.corunduminium.com/Kashmir.htm> Trip to Kashmir

Fun fact: the term "pigeon's blood" to describe a ruby's color refers to the iris of the pigeon's eye.

REPORT ON CABOCHONS 101

In April, Sharon Halton taught a new class, Cabochon 101, to four people. Two of the students had never attempted cabbing before, one had a little experience and one had years of experience but took the class because she wanted to see why Sharon's cabochon girdle was so perfect. She began the class with a handout of information for reference and gave them permission to call her with questions. Everyone got to pick out a slab they liked from the new member's box.

Next, they discussed using templates and examined patterns. Once everyone had picked a shape, she showed them how to use the aluminum stylus and how to sharpen it if needed. She recommended not using black magic marker to mark the template pattern, because if a stone is porous, it can penetrate too far.



The progress of cabs from trimmed slab to finished cab

In the grinding room, she explained the function of different machines. Trim saws are for trimming and small cuts. One saw has a sign saying nothing larger than one inch. Place your fingers on either side of the wheel when holding a slab. Plan to get within about 1/16 inch of your trim line, to minimize grinding time. Be aware that the slimmer the blade, the

more likely it is to cut your fingers if you are careless and push your hand into the blade. Once the students cut out and trimmed stones to the marked line, they learned how to put a girdle line on the stone with the stylus.

Then it was on to the dop station, where she showed them how to dop stones. Hold the dop stick vertical to the stone, wet your fingers, and use your wet fingers to squeeze wax back without burning your fingers, to prevent overflow of wax onto the sides of cabs. And do not leave your dopped stone in the car here in Houston – wax will melt in a hot car. While waiting for the dopped stones to cool, she gave them pre-dopped stones to work with. After completing the stones, she demonstrated how to remove cabs from the dop. Then, if the stones were good enough to polish the face, they are good enough to polish the back as well.

The wheels on the grinding machines are not really that dangerous, except for the super-grinder. However, you should keep your fingers away from the edge of the wheels, not let your cab go beneath the wheel, or push so hard your hand slips. You can carefully lay fingers on the wheel without hurting them, such as when polishing the back of a stone. She also showed them how to manage pointy spots and how not to gouge wheels. She explained different grades of grits, using them progressively, and then checking your cab between wheels of different grits to check for scratches. This prevents bypassing a scratch and creating a polish and then facing the heart-breaking necessity to go back to the 200-grit wheel to get rid of the scratch.

Wear goggles, especially when using the supergrinder, which can throw some good-sized chunks (or take a chunk out of your knuckle). If you are using the supergrinder, give a person using the 8000-grit wheel next to it an opportunity to move or wait until they are done!

Sharon also showed the students how you set up big rocks to cut slabs on the larger saws but emphasized that shop managers are always there to help them set up if they want to slab up their own rocks.

After you have made good cabs, you can plan to take Tony Lucci's silversmithing class and learn to handle a saw and torch to make settings for your cabochons. The more people we can teach, the more involved they will become with the club, and hopefully they will volunteer and serve as officers and on committees in the future.

Sharon had wondered why we did not have a mandatory cabbing class to instruct new members and thought that classes might help prevent inadvertent abuse of the equipment. It is so easy to gouge an expandable drum wheel and damage it!

See Upcoming Classes below for the next Cabs 101 class.

UPCOMING CLASSES

Please refer to our website for registration for upcoming classes:

<https://hgms.org/education/hgms-classes/>

We are seeking teachers to expand our class selections! Specifically PMC, Dichroic Glass, Enameling, Mosaics, and bead weaving instructors are needed. Contact Classes@HGMS.org for more information on teaching or taking classes.

CASTING CLASS (CST-050322-TL)

Tony Lucci's Casting class beginning next week is sold out.

CABOCHONS 101 (CABS101-SH)

Have you ever wondered what goes on in that noisy Lapidary Shop? Sharon Halton, Shop Manager, will teach cabochon making class on Monday, May 9th and Wednesday, May 11th from 7:00 PM to 9:30 PM. This is a 2-part class. Sharon will discuss the principles of the creation of cabochons and present examples of cabochons in various stages of development. Students will choose a small slab, draw a design from HGMS templates, and learn to use the trim saws. Each student will choose a pre-dopped stone for hands-on experience using the grinding machines while their own dopped stones "set". Students will leave with partially worked cabochons and the information and comfort level needed to finish their creations on their own time during HGMS open shop times. No previous experience is needed. The first Cabs101 class received rave reviews and what could be more central to HGMS interests? There is a maximum of 5-students and time is short; so, the sooner you register the better. Cost is \$45.00 for members and \$60.00 for non-members, including all materials; or, you may bring your own stone slab. Minimum of 3-students and maximum of 5.

THE WORST JOB IN LAPIDARY **REPRINTED FROM THE PICK & SHOVEL** **NEWSLETTER OF THE LINCOLN GEM & MINERAL CLUB, INC.** *by James Marburger*

I have been in the lapidary hobby for 60 years and have enjoyed all aspects of the hobby, starting with the excitement of finding a rock which has an intriguing outside. Now this rock is a beauty, but it is on to a tumbler to polish its outside. A beauty for sure, but what is inside? Now to a saw. Oh man! I am hooked. Saw-saw-saw.

Whoa, the saw is full of rock dust and oil. This oil must be cleaned up so I can continue the sawing of rocks. Armed with a putty knife, bucket, many rags, and some elbow grease, the cleaning begins. What an unbelievably dirty job that is. I can't tell you how many saw cleanings I have done, from a 6-inch trim saw to the big boy 24-inch saw.



Inline set-up

There must be a cleaner and easier way to tackle this job. Fast forward to 2022. I have just found a way to clean the saw with a shop vacuum cleaner. Now it is not just a shop vacuum; that would introduce saw oil to the filters and foul the shop vacuum.

By adding a cyclone dust separator to the shop vacuum, it will collect all the dust or oil before it enters the shop vacuum. Harbor Freight has the Bauer cyclone dust separator kit for a 5-gallon bucket for a cost around \$40.00. Add a 5-gallon bucket and a length of soft tygon one inch tubing to reach the bottom back of the saw and you have a mean cleaning machine. On the suction tygon tubing, a screen should be added to prevent chunks from plugging the hose.

Start the vacuuming with the heavy sludge first, then the “cleaner oil” to flush the tubing of the heavy sludge. Once the oil has been vacuumed, the oil sludge can be filtered by placing it in a brown paper bag that is placed in a bucket with holes in it. This bucket is placed over another bucket to catch the filtered oil. I use a plastic plant pot to hold the paper bag which is a bit larger than a paper lunch bag. The oil will filter and the sludge will stay in the bag.

I leave the sludge bag draining until more oil is needed to be filtered. This bag can be placed in a plastic trash bag and sent with the trash to the dump. The filter can be up-scaled to use large paper groceries bag if larger amounts of oil need filtered.

Good luck and happy cleaning your saw.

Neal's comments on these techniques:

The technique in the news letter is based on the sludge being liquid enough to be sucked up.

Our shop uses a light weight oil that causes the particles to settle to a layer that has to be scraped up. The paper bag filter step is good. I have used that regularly. Our process usually just lets the jugs of sludge and oil settle and then pour off the top.

I still have to scrape down the inside of the saw to get rid of the particles that are spattered from the saw.

TEXAS MINERAL AND FOSSIL SHOW IN CONROE

APRIL 22-24, 2022

THE LONE STAR CONVENTION AND EXPO CENTER

by Steve Blyskal

Sigrid Stewart and I went to this mineral show, put on by RMGM Promotions, on Friday, the opening day of the show. Many of the dealers at the show do our Houston Gem and Mineral Society show so one of the reasons to go was to talk to them and provide more of our ¼ page show flyers if they needed them. Another reason was that I really like looking for new minerals for my collection!

On the first aisle we saw I looked at Hagar Minerals and Fossils, from St. Louis, MO. They had an outstanding large woolly Rhinoceros skull with two horns sitting on one corner of their booth! They also had some outstanding specimens of Midwest calcite and nice Mexican minerals.

Around the corner was a dealer I had shopped with before, Malachite and Gems of Africa, who carried polished malachite slabs lots of neat little specimens, like small malachite hearts that will make great gifts.



Rhinoceros skull with two horns

At Costigan's Minerals West, Brian Costigan

showed me some of the new collection that was making its debut at the Show. A very nice cuprian austinite on goethite was one of the minerals that came home with me. Sigrid found a nice selection of Colorado minerals in one area of the booth, also out of old collections, and added some nice small specimens to her Colorado collection.

At Naanak Crystals, a dealer in Indian minerals, I found a nice quartz stalactite covered in small apophyllite crystals. While these have been on the market for many years, I really liked the form of this cabinet size specimen. I also picked out a large cabinet stellerite, a somewhat rare white zeolite mineral related to stilbite.

One of our HGMS show dealers is Nature's Reflection, and they always have a nice cabinet of specimens released from their fine personal collection. This show was no exception. They offered two very fine self-collected smoky quartz crystal groups from Lincoln Co., New Mexico, a closed locality. I picked out a very unusual calcite, with a new crystal form I had not seen before, from the Sweetwater Mine in the Viburnum Trend of Missouri and a fluorite on barite specimen from the mines of Asturias, Spain.



Nature's Reflection display featuring several outstanding malachites

At HGMS show dealer Sidewinder Minerals I saw several Mexican mineral specimens, including a nice calcite from the La Sirena Mine in Guanajuato. Texas Crystal Creations, who were new dealers at the HGMS show last year, had nice groups of gray stibnite crystals from Chinese mines they had just received before the show. At Chaotic2Creations Kris Dingfield had several Colorado specimens from his collecting and trading activities there in the summer and a lovely opal cabochon he had cut at the HGMS shop.

Tex's Rock Shop had their usual fine selection of rough and slab cutting material for lapidaries and promised to have more if I can find additional tables for her this fall. One new dealer, J3 Gem Hunting, a group of young field collectors, had a table full of unusual epimorphs of quartz after calcite and fluorite from a New Mexico location they had worked. Sigrid picked up one of these and some cutting slabs of chalcopyrite with chrysocolla. They should be a challenge to cut!

There were several special exhibits, including a lunar specimen in a clear plastic pyramid, and a slice of the Glorieta Mountain meteorite. Our own Will Heierman (who just talked

about gold mining in Montana at our April meeting) exhibited specimens from his collection of gold nuggets and Montana sapphires.

Since we only had one afternoon, we didn't get to visit all the dealers and should have gone back another day. However, we had the HGMS shop on Saturday and other activities planned for Sunday. We had also hoped to visit the Wholesale area but ran out of time. This is a large show with many dealers, and it takes more than one day to really see it all. It is a long way from Houston (an hour's drive from Katy) but well worth the effort. While the show attendance was not good this year it is hoped this will become a worthwhile complimentary show to the HGMS show and the CLGMS show.

HOUSTON GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
by Sharon Halton

X	President— Nancy English	x	Beading— Maggie Manley
X	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		Mineral—Ray Kizer
	Past President —Sigrid Stewart	X	Paleontology—Mike Dawkins

President Nancy English called the Zoom meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. and a quorum was present.

There were no non-voting members in attendance.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Approval of Minutes: On March 12, 2022, Michele Marsel made a motion to approve the minutes with a correction to the specific dollar amount that was moved by the Beading Section to \$2399.86. Fred Brueckner seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved by email by April 5, 2022.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Michele Marsel sent the Treasurer's Report to members on April 3, 2022. As mentioned last month, a new tab was added to show Year to Date Net Revenue for the committees that generate revenue (Donations, Education, Shop). The Show revenue/expense is still on its own tab. President English requested the following changes be made: On the Account Balances page, change Prosperity label to Prosperity Bank (Capital Repairs/Improvements). And on Expenses, change Building Fund Contribution to Capital Repairs/Improvements.

Other Items to Note:

- The interest rate on our Live Oak savings account is now back to .6% as of

March 1, 2022 President English thanked Michele for bringing us to this bank.

- During the February meeting, it was asked how the receipt of a 1099 from PayPal would affect us and our 990 tax filing. Answer: we already report that revenue on our 990 so the only impact is extra work for the treasurer.
- Status of the Annual report was reviewed and final changes were made. Treasurer Marsel will notify members via the weekly e-Blast that the report is available by request.

President English reported that the February Board Meeting minutes reads “The budget for 2022 was discussed and approved.” No vote was reported in the minutes. Sharon Halton moved that the Budget as presented in the February meeting be accepted. Sarah Metsa seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

BBG Editor: Sigrid Stewart, no report

BBG Notice: On April 3, 2022 Beverly Mace notified members that the online version of the April BBG is available on the HGMS Website

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

Donations Committee: Saxman donation from 2019. Ray Kizer is still evaluating the remainder of the donation and will work with Steve Blyskal to determine if he agrees with the value of the minerals in the collection. If the value is agreed upon between Ray and Steve, the Mineral Section will probably buy it at that price.

The DSAC will have an in-Club Sale & Silent Auction on Saturday, April 23, 2022, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. We will have slabs and rough materials for \$3.00 per pound and many pieces of equipment and tools in a Silent Auction (10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.). See the e-Blast for more details. Beverly Mace has volunteered to help. Additional volunteers would be helpful.

Education Committee: Maggie Manley – Maggie Manley taught a series of new classes in wire jewelry techniques, and Jeanean Slamen conducted a class on the use of hand-held torches. Sharon Halton will be holding a cabbing class on April 22, 2022. Joy Lester will be taking a break from her wire wrapping classes.

Health Safety & Environmental Committee: Sarah Metsa

Nancy English proposed a name change to Club Safety and Policy Committee (CSPC). This will be discussed in their next committee meeting.

The HVAC company, Lee Thompson, Co. made their first quarterly inspection of our two A/C and heating units and twenty-year-old A/C only unit. Now we have new filters and soon we will have them clean the evaporation coils. President English will schedule the coil cleaning.

Resolute Roofing will make its annual inspection in April. HGMS will need to replace the stained ceiling tiles after the inspection. Nancy English will schedule a specific date for the inspection. Resolute will need access to the interior of the Clubhouse.

A discussion about the three cleaning companies was held. President English sent the quotes and a spreadsheet she compiled. Discussion included the weekly vs bi-monthly

options, cost, and services offered by each.

Sharon Halton made a motion to pick “C & S Janitorial Services, Inc.” if President English confirms that the monthly cost is \$325 per month and that there is a 30-day cancellation policy. Michele Marsel seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Membership Committee: Beverly Mace reported new and renewed memberships in March.

Member Counts	New	Renewed (March)	Renewals paid to date	Not yet paid for 2022
Singles	6	13	171	94
Couples	3	6	57	21
Families	2	0	35	14
Youth	1	0	17	9

SECTION REPORTS

Beading Section: third Saturday, 12:30 p.m. April 16, 2022. Maggie Manley and Sharon Halton opened a new account at Chase Bank for the Beading Section. Sharon Halton is authorized to view statements, but she is not an active signer on the account. Chase Bank requires proof of Board action for their own liability in the form of approved minutes in order to add Gretchen Cockerill onto the account as the second signer.

Maggie Manley moved to authorize Gretchen Cockerill as the second signer on the Chase checking account ending in 2782 referred to as the Beading Section Account. Sharon Halton seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Day Light Section: first Wednesday, 1:00 p.m. April 6, 2022.

Gemstones and Faceting Section: second Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., Zoom – Change of Date from second Wednesday to second Thursday, April 14, 2022

Lapidary and Silversmithing Section: third Monday, 7:00 p.m., April 18, 2022. - April stone of the month project will be in a heart shape.

Mineral Section: third Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., April 20, 2022. Zoom program planned.

Paleo Section: third Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., April 19, 2022.

Youth Section: first and third Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. to Noon., - 15 + kids showed up on April 2 and the groups were split up; half of the participants used the shop first, then switched groups for the final hour. Next meetings are April 16 and May 7, 2022.

OLD BUSINESS

Display Cases status – Sigrid Stewart is still waiting to go over this with Kris Dingfield
Semi-Annual Member Conduct Policy Reminder - March 2022: President English thanked Publicity Chairperson Sarah Metsa for posting our first reminder on March 20, 2022.

Dunn Southwest Update:

The painting project will commence on April 8 and continue for 4-6 weeks. Dunn Sw will have a tentative schedule for us later this month.

Dunn Southwest communicated they anticipate work to be performed during regular business hours, after hours and weekends. The contractor (Kirkconnell) will let HGMS know if any vehicles need to be relocated. Dunn SW will do their best to notify you in advance.

Nothing is to be placed on the back porch until all of this work is completed. The area has been cleaned as of now. President English thanked Sharon Halton for taking care of it.

Nancy English will ask Dunn SW if the window and door frames will be painted, when the power washing will start, and how much the painters will charge to paint our sign.

NEW BUSINESS

Update to Access Lock Policy – The new locks have been installed for almost a year and the Access Policy is being reviewed and an updated edition will be presented to the Board in May.

Rocktails – Sarah Metsa would like to establish a quarterly social for new members to meet the Board, Shop Foremen, and Section Chairmen; to tour the shops; and talk about what they can contribute. If there are any new members who would like to help create this, Sarah would like to hear from you. Email her at publicity@hgms.org.

E-blast Recognition Pieces: Via email, Daniel Rodriguez proposed an idea to promote our Club and its' members. Showcase members' projects once a week on a post on our social media, Facebook, Instagram, etc. This would allow members to show off their work and for new members to see what they could make/create.

President English asked Section Representatives to encourage Section Chairman to take pictures of their projects to post in the BBG and on the weekly e-Blast.

Shop Safety: Sharon Halton brought up safety concerns of members using the silver shop without supervision. The safety committee will work on specific policies. President English restated that the Shop Foreman can stop anyone from using the shops if the Foreman deems them not qualified.

The next Board of Directors Zoom meeting is scheduled for the first Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., May 3, 2022. The next General Meeting is scheduled for the fourth Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., April 26, 2022.

Adjourn: Randy Carlson moved to adjourn. Sarah Metsa seconded the motion and it passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:44 p.m.



*More
Cowee
rubies*

HOUSTON GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 26, 2022

by Sharon Halton

President Nancy English called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. She welcomed 28 members to the meeting.

New members: One new member; Carol Ogura was attending for the first time, although she has been a member for several months.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

The speakers used for the hybrid meetings are very sensitive. If you feel the need to have a personal conversation during the meeting or the program, please move to the garage. Look at this clean room!! Check out the spotless restrooms and kitchen, including the refrigerator. I have some special "thank-you"s to give.

I appreciate all of the people that worked to prepare the Club for the deep cleaning on Friday April 15, when Shaza and her "plus 1" from C & S Janitorial came to work.

- On Wednesday, April 14, Sharon Halton began the project by moving tables and chairs and vacuuming the water out of the carpet. Long story for later.
- Daniel Rodriguez put brain and brawn together to clear off the counters, clean out and rearrange all things in the kitchen including the refrigerator. On Thursday, Daniel and L.T. Logan hauled the sodas and boxes of supplies to the classroom. Boyd Shelley took time away from silversmithing to help Neal Immega, Daniel, and L.T. move all the stuff away from the windows and into the garage.
- Thanks to the Youth Section who moved the coolers of sodas back into the refrigerator on Saturday morning.
- Michele Marsel scrubbed the ovens clean on Sunday. She and Dean Wix also cleaned the carpet after the spill from the air conditioner cleaning left a four-foot, in diameter, dirt stain.
- On Tuesday before the Paleo meeting, Beverly Mace and I moved everything out of the classroom into the kitchen and then arranged it into the cabinets.

Thank you to Michele Marsel for coordinating the successful Pounder Sale last Saturday.

Thank you to Mike Sommers for getting the HGMS scholarship Invitations to the Universities and colleges. His new Scholarship committee member, Daniel Rodriguez contacted several of the universities and got our scholarships added to their posting boards. That will get us more candidates.

Thanks to Neal Immega for his timely work on the commodes in both restrooms and for his improvements in the Air Abrasive room.

Approval of Minutes: Will Heierman moved to approve the minutes of the March 22, 2022, General Meeting as published in the April BBG. Richard Good 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 other Section Chairs and Standing Committee Chairs to make any additional announcements.

Lapidary Section - Tony brought up the fact that the moving of all the equipment and shelves were put in the garage and blocked access to the Lapidary Section's storage cabinets. He stated that this has happened previously and it becomes very difficult to access necessary equipment for their section.

Please be aware of all these cabinets as each section needs to have easy access to its equipment. Anyone who puts things in the garage must be aware of the inconvenience this causes.

Membership Committee: Beverly Mace says dues are past due. Without paying them you cannot use the shops, or receive the weekly e-Blast and will not be in the roster for 2022.

Donations, Sales, Auction Committee (DSAC): Michele Marsel – Michele thanked the regular committee members, Richard Good, Libby Guynn, Fred Brueckner, Dave Janos and Neal Immega; extra assistance was provided by Debbie Knight, Dean Wix, John Lee. About 1/3 of the equipment was sold during the sale but the other items are still available tonight for bidding. After tonight these items will be photographed and put up for sale online.

Health Safety & Environmental Committee: Sarah Metsa. The first wave of projects is done. The HVAC maintenance contract has been signed, the first quarterly inspection is done, and the evaporator coils are clean. The cleaning company was hired and has cleaned the club twice now. Resolute Roofers have not set a date yet for their first visit. President English explained the source of the water spot in the meeting room was due to a leak during the cleaning of the evaporator coils. No bucket was placed below the leak, which was thought to be of a small amount. The result was a dirty wet area found the day after and cleaned by Michele and Dean Wix.

Show Committee: Scott Singleton/Sigrid Stewart. The show fliers which were taken to the Clear Lake Show are missing. If you know where they are, please let us know.

Web Site Committee: Scott Singleton/Sigrid Stewart. We are starting a project to get interesting articles previously published in the BBG scanned and put on the Website, so it becomes more useful, meaning accessible by web searches. (Articles hidden in past BBGs are not useful). This is a big job. So, we call on all BBG authors to send us digital versions (i.e. a Word document as well as any figures or pictures in the article) of their past articles if they would like us to have them accessible on the web for all to enjoy. This club has a number of prolific and knowledgeable authors, and we'd like to get their help in this project.

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

Dunn SouthWest has postponed the start of the painting of the building. No date is yet available.

Sigrid Stewart reported that the display cases, which were going to be built by Kris Dingfield, will not be completed by him. He has reported that he is too busy. Other options are being investigated.

NEW BUSINESS

President English asked for any New Business. No new business was discussed. The next Board of Directors meeting will be Tuesday, May 3, 2022, at 7:30 p.m. The next General Meeting will be Tuesday, May 24, 2022, at 7:30 p.m.

Show-n-Tell: Nancy asked for presenters to limit items to 3 items:

Nancy Fischer brought rocks of interest from the Blue Forest (Wyoming) where she was looking for petrified palm wood with blue chalcedony. She also showed rocks (agates) from Happy Hill on the Kokernot o6 Ranch which she collected on her way back to Houston from Wyoming.

Steve Blyskal and Sigrid Stewart showed many of the rocks that they also collected at the Kokernot o6 Ranch. They led a group of 10 club members on a trip to Alpine for 2 days of rock hunting. They went to both Happy Hill and Sagenite Hill. Steve also found a mineral specimen of calcite crystals sitting in a quartz geode. They also showed minerals that they bought at the Texas Mineral and Fossil Show in Conroe.

Drawing: Dean Wix won the Arizona petrified wood

BEFORE WE ADJOURN

Refreshments were provided by President English and Teresa Goodwin brought a chocolate fudge cake.

A Volunteer for next month's refreshments was not identified.

DURING THE BREAK

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

Feed the Kitty! Your donations go to offset the cost of the snacks. Thank the volunteers that made tonight possible.

Adjourn: Sharon Halton moved to adjourn and Will Heierman seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Vice President Metsa introduced the Program:
The EHK Mine by Will Heierman (HGMS Member).