

THE BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

NEWSLETTER OF THE HOUSTON GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY



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Zoisite var. Tanzanite, Merelani Hills, Tanzania

DECEMBER BIRTHSTONES

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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

I am so happy it's Christmas time again, it is my favorite time of year! The major work of the year is done, the Annual Show is in the bag, and everyone can relax a bit and enjoy the Holiday Season and parties. It's time to decorate the house and think about wrapping presents for most of us, or to celebrate Hanukkah.

Once again, I want to thank every one of the dedicated volunteers who helped make the 69th Annual Show the success that it was. This year we introduced new features, brought back old ones, and perfected others. Like every show there will be opportunities for future topics of discussion for Show Committee meetings. The dealers were happy with the turnout, students enjoyed the School Daze program on Friday. On Saturday, 97 scouts attended the Scout program to earn a Geology Badge. The Dino Dig was very popular, the Rock Food Table was marvelous, kids had a good time taking apart old computers for recycle, and playing games in the Youth section. Section booths were manned and had lots of visitors, and so did the Swap area.

All volunteers were invited to our Annual Volunteer Appreciation, hosted at Scott Singleton's home. It was a wonderful get-together fueled by good Mexican food and a few bottles of wine while we discussed the Show. With lots of great door prizes!

Remember to celebrate the season at the HGMS Annual Holiday Potluck Dinner and Auction on December 10 at the Unitarian Fellowship Hall 1504 Wirt Rd. Houston, TX 77055. Set up starts at 5:30 and dinner begins at 6:30 p.m., and we need volunteers to help with both.

Enjoy the holidays! Soon enough it will be time to take stock of the old year and plan for the new.

VICE-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I have a great talk lined up for February, by Sharon Halton speaking about her trip to Australia and New Zealand. I think I heard a mention of opals!

I am not sure about January's program yet, but am looking at a couple of ideas. Stay tuned!

HOLIDAY POTLUCK DINNER AND AUCTION

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2022, AT 6:30 PM

1504 Wirt Rd. Houston, TX 77055

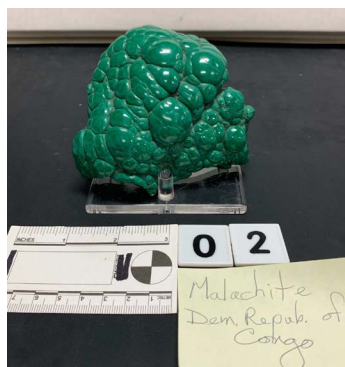
Our Holiday Dinner and auction will be held at the Unitarian Fellowship Hall on 1504 Wirt Rd. Houston, TX 77055

- Potluck Dinner - Please bring sides and desserts. Let Nancy English know what you are bringing.
- HGMS provides the meat
- It is BYOB

PLEASE NOTE: We will need volunteers to help set up the tables, set out the food, and put it all back the way we found it.

Contact Nancy at volunteercoordinator@hgms.org

Thank you to Fred Brueckner and Michele Marsal for preparing the Holiday Auction items' photographs to be advertised in the Sunday e-Blasts.



SECTION REPORTS

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

The Section taught wire-wrapped gemstone rings and soldered sterling silver rings at the 69th HGMS Show in November, and also sold beaded spiders for fundraising.

At the December 17th meeting we will continue to work on making beaded Christmas Tree pendants. All materials supplied by the Section. Always bring beading mat, scissors, wire, wire cutter, round nose and needle nose pliers, thread, and beading needles if you have them.

Would you like to receive notifications about upcoming Beading Group activities?

E-mail beading@hgms.org to be added.



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

All programs are \$5.00 unless stated otherwise and the fee is paid at the meeting. Remember to register with Nancy Searle at daylight@hgms.org in advance so we will have the needed materials for everyone.

- On December 7th, the Section will host our Annual holiday party, pot luck lunch, gift exchange, and planning meeting for the 2023 sessions - come with your ideas of what you would like to do next year!

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

Next meeting is December 8, 2022.

We are looking into ways to keep the section interactive between our once-a-month meetings. That way we can better answer questions and keep an archive of the interesting things we've come across as a group. I'm currently tossing around the idea of using a Discord channel as our means of communication which is easier to navigate than other social media platforms and comes with group voice, text, and video built in.

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

On November 21st, 2022 members of the section began preparing for the holiday season with a Pizza Party and session of Holiday Ornament making using small polished slabs. Bring your Show purchases for Show 'n Tell.

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

- The December meeting will be a Christmas Party on December 18th.
- On November 16th, Steve Blyskal presented a program on the minerals found at Naica, Chihuahua, Mexico.

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

No Paleo meeting in December

We've started hybrid Zoom meetings that include members attending remotely via Zoom; if you're intrigued by dinosaurs, trilobites, field trips to collect Texas fossils and all other paleontology-related topics we'd love to have you attend a meeting in one way or another and see what we've got going on. If you'd like to join the Paleo Section email list, send an email to hgmspaleosection@gmail.com and ask to be added.

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

The Youth Section Holiday Party will be held at the HGMS clubhouse on Saturday, December 3rd from 10:00 to Noon. This will be our last meeting for 2022. Pizza will be provided. You may bring snacks, desserts or side dish. If you plan to attend please RSVP to Beverly Mace at beverly_mace@att.net by Dec 1st. I will need a head count to assure enough pizza is ordered.

If you have not picked up your show competition stones you may do so at the party.

NOTES FROM NEAL

In The Past - <https://www.sciencenews.org/article/oldest-microfossils-suggest-life-thrived-earth-about-4-billion-years-ago> Gee, I wonder if these people have any lapidary experience. The rock they show looks a whole lot like tube agate. They think it is early bacteria.

Science Olympiad - I have started doing Science Olympiad training today (Wed) of a High School student on Rocks and Minerals. Let me know if you want to participate.

One of our members and spouse have tested positive for covid. Both were at the Show two weeks ago, at the Volunteer Appreciation party a week ago, and at the General meeting on Tuesday. Member wants to be responsible and make everyone aware of this. Member and spouse are vaccinated but are quite sick. If you are feeling unwell, please be cautious. Get tested, contact your doctor, etc.

SHOP AND BUILDING NEWS

by Neal Immega

Upcoming Club/Shop Closures

The holidays are coming and HGMS will be closed on the following days:

- Christmas Day - Sunday, December 25
- New Year's Day - Sunday January 1

There will be no open shop on the following days unless a trained Shop Supervisor can cover the 10-3 shift. Please email maintenance@hgms.org if you want to volunteer.

- Sunday, December 11
- Saturday, December 17

Air Tools: I have a new user of the air tools. She tried to use the tools at the science museum but they would not let her use their air abrasive that blows iron dust because the powder is too expensive. I told her to go crazy with our powdered dolomite because it is so cheap from the Ceramic Store. They price it right.

Report issues or concerns about the Lapidary Shop, Jewelry Shop or Center Classroom to: maintenance@hgms.org

Report issues or concerns about the Air Abrasives Shop to nealimmega@gmail.com

LIBRARY NEWS

by Neal Immega

Rocks and Minerals frequently tells me about old mines, old minerals, and things that have no relevance to me. It did it again with a center spread on Glendonites (Vol 97, Nov-Dec 2022, on the new periodical shelf in the library).

Let's start at the beginning. A clam paleontologist is visiting north of the arctic circle to look for clams of course. In addition to clams, he also finds brown crystals in the mud and he takes back a handful to his dorm and goes to bed. When he gets up the crystals have turned to white mush. It turns out that the crystals are Ikaite, a mineral of calcium carbonate with 6 waters attached that is only stable at freezing temperatures. It is a well-known mineral to chemists who synthesized it 150 years ago but not to mineralogists. Apparently, these crystals occasionally get encased in mud and mineralized with calcite and called Glendonite.



Glendonite after Ikaite, Kola Peninsula, James St. John, CC BY 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

Ok, this is just mineralogy gibberish, let's get to the payoff.

In opal fields in Australia are found "fossil pineapples" or "opal pineapples". They are fossil casts after the original Ikaite gets cemented with calcite becoming Glendonite and then replaced with precious opal. See one at <http://whitecliffsoopal.com/html/introduction.html>

Sometimes these pseudomorphs are incorrectly attributed to glauberite.

There is considerable interest in this because the mineral ikaite is only stable in freezing temperatures. It is nice to see that the clam paleontologists can help out their mineralogist friends, but it would be unwise for me to point it out because I live with one.

EDUCATION

by Maggie Manley

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. We are planning to offer more short & easy summer-time classes for those interested in making some fun projects.

If you have a project to teach, please e-mail classes@HGMS.org with a contact number,

CLASSES:

SANTA'S WORKSHOP

Sunday, December 4, 2022 from 10 AM to 4 PM

HGMS Clubhouse, 10805 Brooklet Drive, Houston, TX 77099

HGMS will be holding Santa's Workshop on Sunday, December 4th. Attendees can choose between 15 different session times for 5 or 6 different classes. Participants will leave with gift-worthy items. Register for individual classes on the HGMS website under Education/Classes.

PREPARATION OF FOSSILS

Taught by Neal Immega, PHD Paleontologist & Museum Docent.

Neal will teach you to prepare fossils by removing matrix using pneumatic tools and micro sandblasters. Dress to get dusty. You will leave with a fossil and knowledge of how to prepare fossils.

LOCATION: HGMS - Air Tools Room (off garage)

COST: Free; Pre-Registration is required

DURATION: 15 to 30 minutes



MAXIMUM PER SESSION: 2-students maximum per session.
AGE: 16 years to adult
REGISTER FOR ONE OF SESSIONS ONLINE: (Max. of 2-students/session)
Class #1A-120422-NI 10:00 to 10:30 AM
Class #1B-120422-NI..... 11:00 to 11:30 AM
Class #1C-120422-NI..... 1:00 to 1:30 PM
Class #1D-120422-NI..... 2:00 to 2:30 PM

SHIBORI TEA TOWELS
by Jeanean Slamen

Join us for a fun, slightly messy class to learn the Shibori tying and clamping method and dye 26” square cotton tea towels in an indigo dyebath. Each student will have time to dye 4 or 5 tea towels during class (depending on the number of students). Indigo is a beautiful and historic dye; your towels will have many uses in the kitchen and at the table.

LOCATION: Start in the main meeting room and soak, dye, rinse & line dry in yard lawn area. In case of rain, garage will be utilized.

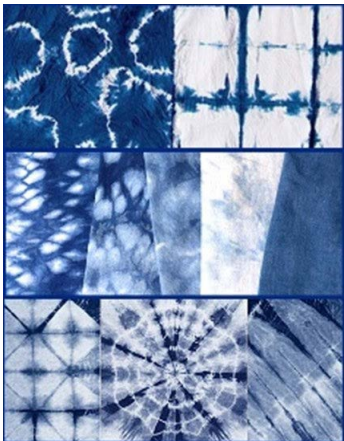
COST: \$48.00, Pre-Registration is required
All tools and materials included, EXCEPT! students should bring their own protective rubber gloves to be sure of a proper fit.

DURATION: 2 to 2.5 hours (Depending on number of students)

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Easy

MINIMUM / MAXIMUM PER SESSION: 4 minimum/Maximum 10 per session
AGE: Ages 14 and up. Any student under 18 must be accompanied by a parent on premises.

REGISTER ONLINE:
Class 2A-120422-JS.....10:00 AM to 12:30 PM



HOLIDAY EARRINGS AND ORNAMENT
by Nancy Searle and Charlie Holden, Day Light Section

Nancy and Charlie will teach you to make two pair of holiday earrings or a pair of earrings and a Christmas/Hanukkah snowflake decoration. These will be great stocking stuffers



for the holidays. Earring kits will be available with directions for sale at the show. Pre-made snowflakes will also be available for purchase at the workshop at a cost of \$8.00.

LOCATION: HGMS Main meeting room
COST: \$10.00 Includes instruction, materials and use of tools
DURATION: 30 minutes to 1-hour
LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Beginner Level
MINIMUM / MAXIMUM PER SESSION: Minimum 5; Maximum 12
AGE: 12 years +
REGISTER FOR ONE OF THE SESSIONS ONLINE:
Class 3A-120422-NS.....11:00 AM to Noon
Class 3B-120422-NS.....12:00 PM to 1 PM

POLISH A CABOCHON

by Richard Rexroad and Michele Marsel

Rick and Michele, HGMS Shop Supervisors will teach you to polish a cabochon in the HGMS Lapidary Shop. You will be provided with a prepared cabochon preform that has been cut, shaped, and dopped to streamline the process. You will polish the stone on the machines in the Lapidary Shop. You will leave with a polished cabochon.

Photo shows stages of polishing from rough slab to polished cabochon.



It is highly recommended that you take Sharon Halton's CABS 101 class for complete instruction when it is offered again, if you enjoy this short introductory class.

LOCATION: Lapidary Shop
COST: \$10.00 Includes instruction and materials
DURATION: 1.5 to 2-hour
LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Easy
MINIMUM / MAXIMUM PER SESSION: 1-student minimum; 4 students maximum
AGE: 14 years to adult. Any student under 18 must be accompanied by a parent on premises.
REGISTER FOR ONE OF THE SESSIONS ONLINE:
Class 4A-120422-RR.....10:30 AM to Noon
Class 4B-120422-MM.....1:00 to 3:00 PM

ADJUSTABLE KNOTTED NECKLACE & TASSEL

by Maggie Manley, Educ. & Beading Chair

Maggie will teach you to make an adjustable knotted necklace with tassel. You will knot beads onto waxed cord and create a fancy tassel with bead cap. This necklace adjusts from approximately 19" to approximately 38" in length, plus the tassel. Skills learned in this class can be used to create many different necklaces and tassels. Examples of similar projects will be presented. This necklace will be a well-loved, hand-crafted gift for someone special; or, that special you. Kits will be available for purchase at workshop with directions, if you cannot take



the class.

LOCATION: Main meeting room

COST: \$20.00 Includes materials and tool usage

DURATION: 1.5 hours

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Beginner Level

MINIMUM / MAXIMUM PER SESSION: Minimum 1, Maximum 6

AGE: 16 years plus

REGISTER FOR ONE OF THE SESSIONS ONLINE:

Class 5A-120422-MM.....10:30 AM to 12:00 PM

Class 5B-120422-MM.....1:00 PM to 2:30 PM

TWO STERLING STACKING RINGS

by Jeanean Slamen

In this class you'll learn to use a jeweler's saw and a small butane torch to make two sterling silver stacking rings similar to the photo, from beautiful patterned wire. Jeanean Slamen is the teacher.

LOCATION: Metalsmithing Shop

COST: \$50.00 Includes all materials and tool usage

DURATION: 1-1/2-hours

DIFFICULTY: Easy to Intermediate

AGE: 18 years +

REGISTER ONLINE:

Class 6A-120422-JS.....1:30 to 3:30 PM



BEADED BOY OR GIRL

by Maggie Manley, Education & Beading Section Chair

Maggie will teach you to make an approximately 2-1/2" tall beaded ballerina or a beaded boy that can be used as a pendant, purse charm, zipper pull, bookmark, etc. This beautifully detailed little figurine is custom designed by Maggie for HGMS as a unique and memorable holiday gift. Children and adults love them! You will learn to work with wire and beads in this lesson. Pendant can be added to an adjustable cord or bookmark for \$3.00. Figures are poseable. These are not toys. Kits can be purchased at workshop w/directions.

LOCATION: Main meeting room

COST: \$18.00 Includes materials & tool usage

DURATION: 1.5-hour

DIFFICULTY: Beginner to Intermediate Level

AGE: 14 years or older

MINIMUM/MAX: 1/6

REGISTER ONLINE:

Class 7A-120422-MM.....3:00 PM to 4:30 PM



WIRE-WRAPPED EARRINGS AND PENDANT

By Susan Burch

Susan will teach you to create one or more components, depending on the amount of

time you wish to spend in this session. You will choose copper or sterling silver wire and genuine stone or high-quality glass beads for your kit. You will learn to wrap and curl wire along with making loops to attach beads and use as your bail. Once you have the basics, you can use this component later to make an ornament to add to other projects, entire chain or even a bracelet to match your pendant and earrings. Susan has 22 years of experience in wire-wrapping. She teaches beginning and intermediate level classes for HGMS.



LOCATION: Main meeting room

COST: Includes materials & tool usage as follows:

-Copper: Pendant and Earrings \$16.00

-Sterling: Pendant and Earrings \$22.00

AGE: 16 years +

MINIMUM / MAX: 2 students / 6 students

REGISTER ONLINE:

CLASS 8A-COPPER-SB OR CLASS 8A-STERLING-SB from 10:30 TO Noon

CLASS 8B-COPPER-SB OR CLASS 8B-STERLING-SB fr

DECEMBER BIRTHSTONES

by Sigrid Stewart

Birthstones for December are tanzanite, zircon, and turquoise, although it is the blue tints of the latter two that are being promoted by the gem industry.

Tanzanite, a lovely blue-purple stone, can substitute for sapphire, although it is softer, and sometimes not much less expensive. Tanzanite may be the newest gemstone and is found only in Tanzania.

It is a variety of the mineral zoisite, a calcium aluminum hydroxyl sorosilicate, with the chemical formula is $(\text{Ca}_2\text{Al}_3(\text{SiO}_4)(\text{Si}_2\text{O}_7)\text{O}(\text{OH})) + (\text{Cr}, \text{Sr})$, with trace amounts of vanadium accounting for the blue color. It was introduced to the jewelry market by Tiffany's in 1968.

Zircon is an under-appreciated stone that appears in a great variety of colors. It can be a diamond replacement in its colorless form. Zircon and cubic zirconia both contain zirconium, but their chemical formulas and crystal structures are different. The zircon rough that you can buy is natural,



Zoisite, var. Tanzanite, Merelani Hills, Tanzania.

Photo by Steve Blyskal.

while cubic zirconia sold for faceting is synthetic. Confusingly, zircon can also be man-made and cubic zirconia can exist in a natural form. Zircon is common in both igneous and metamorphic rocks, and as detrital grains in sandstone. It has a hardness of 7.5 and crystallizes in the tetragonal class. Colors are brown, blue, gray and colorless. Heat treatment can turn brown or grey zircon blue. It is a zirconium silicate mineral with the formula (ZrSiO₄).

Turquoise, on the other hand, has been known since antiquity. It is important in cultures around the world, notably Amerindian, Mongolian, and Persian. Beautiful turquoise has been mined in Iran (formerly Persia) since antiquity, and it was a popular trade item, beloved for its color and protective qualities. There are many mines in the American Southwest and Navaho and Hopi jewelry have become famous world-wide.

Many books and articles have been written about turquoise, and the name itself is a popular adjective for describing blues of certain shades and tropical seas. The color turquoise is a blue with some green, but the gemstone turquoise comes in shades from almost white through many shades of blue and green, with and without brown or black matrix or spiderwebbing. It is a hydrated phosphate of copper and aluminum, with the chemical formula CuAl₆(PO₄)₄(OH)₈·5H₂O. Or you could just call it beautiful!



Photo by Sigrid Stewart

References:

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

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

<https://tskies.com/blogs/news/the-significance-of-turquoise-in-native-american-culture>

Elbaite and Willemite photo by Stephen Blyskal, Turquoise by Sigrid Stewart

CHRISTMAS MINERAL OR ROCK REVISITED

*Don Shurtz, Pleasant Oaks Gem and Mineral Club of Dallas
Chips and Chatter, December 2022*

The December 2018 Chips and Chatter featured an article titled "Tourmaline, a Mineral for Christmas." The Watermelon variety of tourmaline with its red and green needles on a white matrix had all the colors to remind me of Christmas – Green (Christmas Tree), Red (Santa's Suit), and White (Snow).

As a rock for Christmas, I nominated Bloodstone – a green variety of chalcedony or Heliotrope that has red spots of hematite scattered



Tourmaline, Wikipedia



Elbaite, Himalaya Mine, California
Photo Steve Blyskal

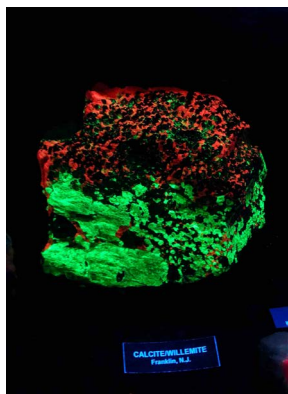
throughout. Again, it was the colors, red and green, that led me to name it my Christmas Rock.

In December 2019 I added the Calcite and Willemite specimens from Franklin County, NJ to my list of Christmas Minerals. When illuminated with an ultraviolet light source (black light), Willemite displays brilliant red and Calcite displays brilliant green areas (islands) on a black background. When illuminated by a normal light source, it often shows green and white areas.



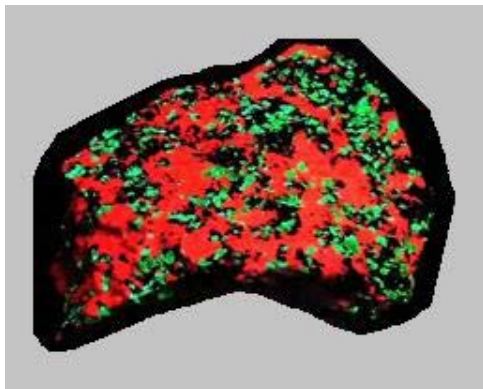
Bloodstone, Wikipedia

I was thinking about a new Christmas Rock or Mineral and found a gold mine of ideas on Mindat, an article titled Minerals Reminiscent of Christmas (reference below).



Willemite, photo Steve Blyskal

Due to copyright laws, I cannot show you the pictures from the article, but I would highly encourage you to follow the link and take a look for yourself. You will find a decorated Christmas Tree in a Silver specimen, a Stilbite bow tinged with Celadonite, a Christmas scene with a Christmas tree using rocks and minerals as ornaments, rocks and mineral gifts around the tree, and a fireplace with a glowing (red colored) rock fire.



Willemite, photo Don Shurtz

Next is a Mesolite specimen shaped like a snowman carrying a small gift of stilbite.

You will also find a Gold and a Cerussite Christmas wreaths, a blue Christmas tree, a mineral forest with a Christmas tree, a

Christmas tree with Quartz Points decorations, and more – it just keeps going on. Again, I encourage you to follow the link and see for yourself.

As I was reading about the Gold and Cerussite wreaths, it suddenly dawned on me what the most obvious Christmas Mineral/Rock should be, and it is not a rock or a mineral, but it sure seems like one. It is COAL.



Coal, Photo Don Shurtz

What else better represents Christmas than a stocking stuffed with Coal that you may have dreaded if you were a “bad” little boy or girl. So, it may represent Christmas, but it is the Christmas you don’t want to have. There is nothing like a gentle reminder of coal in your stocking you hang up at the fireplace to remind you to be the perfect angel, at least during December!

Reference: Mindat, Minerals Reminiscent of Christmas,

<https://www.mindat.org/mesg-278215.html>

Pictures: Willemite and Coal by Don Shurtz

Elbaite and Tourmaline by Steve Blyskal

Tourmaline from Wikimedia Commons (CC-BY-SA-3.0), Coal from Wikimedia Commons (Public Domain)

Bloodstone from Ra'ike, CC BY-SA 3.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>>, via Wikimedia Commons

MINECRAFT TEACHES CHILDREN ABOUT MINERALS AND ROCKS

by Sigrid Stewart

Sort of! The properties ascribed to the building blocks employed in the game Minecraft would amaze most mineralogists. But then, it is a game, one both children and adults can enjoy. Families can build “worlds” together (or blow them up). When I played Minecraft, a sandbox game developed by Mojang Studios, with my grandkids during the first summer of lockdown, I often laughed at the mining of diamonds or iron or the use of bedrock or obsidian for building. Something to remember: if you dig into bedrock too far, you can literally fall off the world (and die). Of course, there are many materials the gamer must acquire if selecting the option of building a world from the beginning, starting with shelter from the omnipresent zombies and creating weapons and tools.

Most parents or grandparents can’t walk to a display case and pull out a specimen of obsidian and say, “Here is the real rock” and discuss its properties with the young players building worlds. I could do that even if the kids would rather focus on the game. I figured that at least the young gamers were getting used to the idea that it takes resources to build everything they see around them.

So, I thought about an article about what kids can begin to learn about rocks and minerals from Minecraft, and after I started researching the idea, I found that there was already a great one on Mindat. Visit <https://www.mindat.org/a/minecraft> for this educational resource, written by Jolyon Ralph, creator of [Mindat.org](https://www.mindat.org). Hopefully kids will be impressed enough to learn more about the properties of rocks and minerals!



Minecraft: Bedrock Edition box art, Wikipedia

That made me wonder about local geological education. Here are some tidbits from the Houston Independent School District:

<https://www.houstonisd.org/Page/158356>

- “Our magnet program hinges on the belief that “knowledge of the world is only to be acquired out in the world” as stated by Phillip Stanhope.”
- “Our overarching programs are Environmental Science and Animal Science. Under Environmental Science, scholars explore ecology, chemistry, geology, and atmospheric sciences. Animal science covers livestock and animal domestication. We bridge the two strands together with the following overlapping sciences: biology, zoology, soil science, geography, and marine life.”

<https://www.houstonisd.org/Page/172997>

- “The AP Environmental Science course is the equivalent of a one-semester, introductory college course in environmental science, through which students engage with the scientific principles, concepts, and methodologies required to understand the interrelationships of the natural world. “The course requires that students identify and analyze natural and human-made environmental problems, evaluate the relative risks associated with these problems, and examine alternative solutions for resolving or preventing them. Environmental science is interdisciplinary, embracing topics from geology, biology, environmental studies, environmental science, chemistry, and geography.”

While “inter-disciplinary” may be good, you have to wonder if there is much exposure to geology outside of its relevance to other subjects.

Other organizations also recognize that there is a shortfall in geological education.

From <https://www.americangeosciences.org/news/earth-science-week-houston-puts-city-celebration-spotlight>

- Earth Science Week: Houston Puts City Celebration in Spotlight
- “AGI is collaborating with the Houston Geological Society (HGS) and the Houston Independent School District (HISD) to extend and deepen the reach of the successful Earth Science Week campaign throughout the Houston area with special events, educational materials, online resources, and activities in schools and other settings.”

This makes me appreciate the role of HGMS in education about Earth Science, Geology and our rockhound hobby even more. We can be proud of our outreach efforts to the public, which include our Annual Show, School Daze program, Mineral sets and other

activities. There is a reason our show is popular, and I hope we can continue entertaining and educating the people of the Houston area.

References:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minecraft>
including Photo: Minecraft: Bedrock Edition box art
<https://www.mindat.org/a/minecraft>
<https://www.houstonisd.org>
<https://www.americangeosciences.org/news/earth-science-week-houston-puts-city-celebration-spotlight>

JOAN RILEY

A memorial service for Joan Riley will be held on December 29th 10:30 AM at St.Thomas More Catholic Church, 10330 Hillcroft Street Houston, Texas

**HOUSTON GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 1, 2022**
By Nancy English

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		Lapidary & Silversmithing—Richard Good
X	Secretary—Sharon Halton	X	Mineral—Ray Kizer
	Past President —Sigrid Stewart	X	Paleontology—Mike Dawkins

President Nancy English called the Zoom meeting to order at 7:36 p.m.
A quorum was present.

Non-voting members in attendance: Susan Moore

PRESIDENT’S COMMENTS:

Approval of Minutes: Sharon will not be available to take minutes during the December Board meeting. Nancy requested someone commit to taking the minutes in December and writing them up for editing and presenting to the Board for approval, and then forward them to the BBG Editor. We do not have a meeting during the December party, but it would be nice to have a write-up about the food and auction items.

The president thanked Sharon for taking on the Secretary position despite personal difficulties.

Approval of Board of Directors' Meeting held 10-4-2022:
Fred Brueckner moved via email to approve the minutes of the October 4, 2022 Board of Directors' Meeting. Richard Good seconded the motion. It was voted on via email and passed on October 29, 2022.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Michele Marsel did not send the Treasurer's Report to members since this is the first of the month and all the data is not available. The Live Oak Bank account has increased to 2.75% for the funds there.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

BBG Notice: Beverly Mace will notify members when the online version of the November BBG is available on the HGMS Website.

Donations, Sales, Auction Committee (DSAC): Michele Marsel - Both Dr. Rock's and the Frantom saws sold for a total of \$1750.00. A Chairperson is still needed for this section. After the Show, the items for sale that have not been sold will be listed on a social media platform.

Education Committee: Maggie Manley said that a Santa's workshop will have 14 classes on December 4th and there will be classes during the show. Santa's workshop classes include the preparation of fossils and cabochon making. No instructor fees were added for use of the club. Volunteers would be appreciated and show new members around and help participants find their class areas. Maggie asked Nancy English, the Volunteer Coordinator, to provide some volunteers to guide students to the fifteen different classes. Sharon Halton says that she will be back to teaching the cabbing class and the dichroic glass class.

Safety/Policy Committee: Michele Marsel reported A Shop Supervisor Scheduler is needed. Nancy English will contact several people who may be interested.

Michele Marsel and Richard Good will interview a General Contractor who was recommended, James Burrell.

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

Member counts	New
Singles	2
Couples	1
Families	3
Youth	2

Scholarship Committee: Mike Sommers. Nancy English has asked Scott Singleton and Mike Dawson to prepare a scholarship flyer for the college Show volunteers. HGMS scholarships are only available to 3rd year students.

Show Committee:
Humble Civic Center: The first half of the Humble Civic Association fee has been paid. The next half will be paid on November 11, 2022.

Volunteers: Nancy English has filled 95 of the 170 volunteer shifts needed to produce the Annual Show. She has more volunteer forms to log in. The National Honor Societies from Humble ISD and Kingwood ISD have provided the bulk of the volunteers for Saturday mornings.

Dealers: There will be new dealers at the show.

Member Tickets: The Show Committee will not be mailing tickets to members this year. Instead, tickets can be purchased online for a \$2.00 discount using the code "2OFF". All online tickets will have a QR code to be read by the ticket takers.

SECTION REPORTS

President English asked Section Chairmen or Representatives to limit their comments to news about the Section and problems the BOD needs to know about since the meetings are posted on HGMS.org under programs and the calendar is posted on the weekly eblast.

Beading Section in person: third Saturday, 12:30 p.m., November 19, December 17, 2022, January 21, 2023.

Day Light Section in person: first Wednesday, 1:00 p.m., November 2, December 7, 2022, January 4, 2023.

Gemstones and Faceting Section Zoom Hybrid: second Thursday, 6:30 p.m., November 10, December 8, 2022, January 12, 2023. Pot luck dinner. Randy Carlson held a training class for gem ID. These people will help with the Gem ID table at the Show.

Lapidary and Silversmithing Section in person: third Monday, 7:00 p.m., November 21, No meeting in December, and January 16, 2023.

Mineral Section Zoom program planned: third Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., November 23, December meeting will be a Christmas Party. Next meeting January 18, 2023.

Paleo Section in person: third Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., November 22, December 20, 2022, and January 17, 2023. The Paleo Section held its first Zoom Meeting on October 18. It went well.

Youth Section in person: first and third Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. to Noon, November 5 and 19, December 3, 2022, and January 7 and 21, 2023. Youth Section Christmas Party will be held on December 3rd.

OLD BUSINESS

2022 AFMS/SCFMS Convention: Ray Kizer represented HGMS at the Convention in Westwego, LA. He presented awards to several people at the General Meeting. Sigrid Stewart won for being editor of the BBG. President English asked Ray to provide the awards list to Sigrid to publish in the BBG. Sigrid got many awards as did Steve, and Ed Clay.

Display Cases status: No Report

New officers for the 2023 Board of Directors: On October 30, 2022, Ray Kizer volunteered to make phone calls to prospective officers. Nancy English provided him with a list of people she is acquainted with who would be good candidates. Susan Moore joined the November 1 meeting to see if she would be interested in being Secretary in 2023.

President English asked for more Old Business.

NEW BUSINESS

Bylaws Changes:

After discussion with Nancy English, Michele Marsel presented the following explanation and Motion to Update HGMS Bylaws below to ensure the Board can meet quorum requirements in 2023. Per the current Bylaws, after the Board approved the motion below, the updates need to be published to our members 30 Days ahead of the confirming vote. In order to vote at the November General Meeting, we need to pass and notify now.

CURRENT BYLAWS

ARTICLE IV: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 2 - Meetings

The Board chooses the time, place, and format (in person or virtual) to meet. Seven Board members constitute a quorum. Meetings may be held at the call of the President or at the request of any Board member.

All business coming before the Board will be decided by a majority vote of the Board members present if there is a quorum. The President will only cast a vote in the event of a tie. Only the Board members have the right to vote at a Board meeting. Proxy voting will not be allowed. Special Meetings and voting via email will be allowed when pressing business decisions are required outside of normally scheduled Board Meetings. Special email meetings and votes will be subject to the same quorum and voting rules as regular Board Meetings.

If we are not able to elect a new 1st VP, Treasurer, and Secretary for 2023, the Board will only have 7 voting members (because Nancy English only votes to break a tie), and if even one person misses a Board meeting no votes can be held. The definition of a Board quorum needs to be updated to avoid possible inability to hold votes for next year. Robert's Rules of Order states that small boards such as ours may allow the President to vote and I think we should change that. Additionally, we need to redefine what constitutes a quorum in a way that avoids ties and is flexible to adjust the number of Board members.

Michele Marsel moved that the HGMS Bylaws be amended as follows:

ARTICLE IV: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 2 - Meetings

The Board chooses the time, place, and format (in person or virtual) to meet. A Quorum is defined as 1/2 the number of voting Board Members rounded up to the nearest odd number to avoid tied votes. Meetings may be held at the call of the President or at the request of any Board member.

All business coming before the Board will be decided by a majority vote of the Board members present if there is a quorum. [REMOVE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE] The President will only cast a vote in the event of a tie. Only the Board members have the right to vote at a Board meeting. Proxy voting will not be allowed. Special Meetings and voting via email will be allowed when pressing business decisions are required outside of

normally scheduled Board Meetings. Special email meetings and votes will be subject to the same quorum and voting rules as regular Board Meetings.

Example of how the quorum will function:

- If we don't fill the 1st VP and Treasurer positions, then there will be 9 voting Board members including the President. 1/2 that number is 4.5 which would be rounded up to equal a quorum of 5
- If we fill all positions and have 11 voting Board Members, 1/2 that number is 5.5 and that would round up to a quorum of 7 (must be an odd number).

Maggie Manley seconded the motion. By October 18, seven Board members (a quorum) had voted to approve. During this Board meeting, President English asked for a show of hands for the record. 7 For, 1 Opposed, 2 Abstained.

President English presented the approved motion to the General Meeting on October 25, 2022. She explained that the motion had been posted in the Sunday eBlast on October 23, thus beginning the 30-day notice countdown for the membership. The motion will be presented to the November 22 General Meeting attendees for a vote.

The next Board of Directors Zoom meeting will be on the first Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., December 6, 2023.

The President thanked Sarah Metsa for her great job on weekly eBlast newsletters this year. She states that she will continue this next year.

Holiday Party on December 10th, 2022 at the Unitarian Fellowship on Wirt Road at 6:00 p.m.

The next General Meeting will be on fourth Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. November 22, 2022. Sigrid Stewart will present pictures of her recent trip to Hawaii.

President English asked for more New Business.

Adjourn: Ray Kizer moved to adjourn. Sharon Halton seconded the motion and it passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

11-8-22 Fred Brueckner moved to approve the minutes, Michele Marsel seconded the motion. Bev, Ray, Fred, Michele, Mike – quorum 11-9-2022, Sharon, Richard

HOUSTON GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

November 22, 2022

By Nancy English

President Nancy English called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. She welcomed 23 attendees in the room and 9 people on Zoom.

Guests: Mark Segall became a member due to his “love of rocks.” Valerie Balsiger and Gerry Menezes came to visit.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

The speakers used for the hybrid meetings are overly sensitive. If you feel the need to have a personal conversation during the meeting or the program, please move to the garage. To the speaker, the meeting is being recorded. Please, remind us to turn off the recording when your speech begins.

Approval of Minutes: Ray Kizer moved to approve the minutes of the October 25, 2022, General Meeting as published in the November BBG. James Eleckel seconded the motion and it passed.

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.

Sarah Metza explained that new members are added automatically to the email list as soon as Beverly Mace forwards the membership information to Sarah. Members only need to contact the Publicity Chair at News@hgms.org if they want to be removed from the e-Blast list.

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

Education Committee: Maggie Manley Nancy English reminded the audience that HGMS is offering a Santa's Workshop Day on Sunday, December 4, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the HGMS Clubhouse. Participants will leave with projects that are suitable for gifting and information about HGMS and what we have to offer. There are fourteen sessions comprised of seven different projects planned. Costs will range from free to \$50.00. These are short-term, beginner to intermediate-level classes. All of the classes being offered were published in the eBlast. Registration is available on the HGMS website and is required to attend.

Safety/Policy Committee: Nancy English/Michele Marsal Our next meeting is scheduled for December 5.

Show Committee: Scott Singleton's report via email.

Attendance:

Through the front door: 2557 adults, 407 kids = total 2964. This is 363 less than last year so it is a bit disconcerting that the trend is down. However, we raised our ticket price by \$1 so the revenue stayed about the same.

Kids Day: 933 kids, about 480 adults on Friday. All of these are free, but this meant that a total of over 2000 people visited our show on that day, which was one of the main reasons our dealers were ecstatic about their sales on that day. Plus, we provided a great educational program for the general public, thus satisfying our educational non-profit tax-exempt status.

Scout Geology Merit Badge Program: we had 97 Scouts go through our merit badge program on Saturday. This program takes a lot of effort to put together but is another educational service we provide to the public.

Security:

Security: Our security team, led by Rick Rexroad and Sharon Halton and a host of volunteers, successfully caught two shoplifters red-handed. Our onsite Humble PD officers apprehended the suspects and had them return the items before escorting them out the door.

Safety:

EMS: we had one health event at the show. One of our youth volunteers fainted at the sight of blood and fell backward causing a possible concussion. The EMS was called to provide first aid and call 911 which resulted in an ambulance and fire truck responding. The youth was taken to the hospital for testing and is OK.

Volunteers:

135 people volunteered to make the Show happen.

That includes all the people who filled the shifts:

To set up on Thursday

To Sell and Take Tickets

Run the Info Booth

Security

The Dino Dig

The Youth Area

The Computer Recycle table

The Swap Area

The Paleo Table

The Mineral Table

Hospitality

The Show Committee

The Education volunteers for Kids Field Trip Day and Scout Day

Demonstrators,

HGS-Houston Geology Society

HMNS-Houston Museum of Natural Science

and,

SF Austin Geology Department, information added by Steve Blyskal.

Steve Blyskal said Scott Singleton invited the Stephen F. Austin Geology Department to set up a table in the Atrium at the Show. Their displays dovetailed with the Youth Area rock displays and educational materials.

Nancy English as Volunteer Coordinator said

'It surprises me every year that the people we need to staff the Show for 4 days materialize to make it happen.'

Thank You Party:

On Saturday night November 19, 2022, Scott and Eileen Singleton hosted another Volunteer Appreciation Party for the Show volunteers and the Club volunteers. Forty of us ate Fajita Pete's Mexican food, drank wine and beer, and took home door prizes. Surrounded by Scott's gorgeous collection of specimens, we heard the statistics that are available and listened to some volunteers' ideas for a better volunteer experience and a better Show. Scott donated petrified wood. Neal brought fossils. Sarah brought Info Booth largesse. Nancy English brought leftover volunteer-shift door prizes. There was plenty for everyone.

First-year volunteers came to meet other rock lovers and propose ideas for future shows.

It is a joy to meet new members and experience their enthusiasm.
Thank you to all of you in this room and on Zoom who volunteered. Thank you to all of you who are reading this.

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 HGMS Website <https://hgms.org> under Publications.

Vote to accept the new slate of Officers for 2023:

President NANCY ENGLISH

1st VP SARAH METSA, (with technical assistance) from Tom English

2nd VP BEVERLY MACE (this will be her 29th year)

Secretary TBD

Treasurer TBD

Michele Marsel will continue to do the bookkeeping and work with President English to field any questions the Board has. Michele will not be attending the meetings NOR take part as a voting member.

Nancy Fischer moved to approve the proposed slate of officers for 2023. Ray Kizer seconded the motion and it passed.

Bylaws change:

The BOD passed a motion to change the Bylaws. Because of the pending change in the number of board members the By-Laws need to be changed so club business can continue in January. During the last General Meeting, President English read from the Bylaws (which were distributed in the recent eBlast) and explained that the Board of Directors will not be able to reach a quorum to vote on any business without a change to the current bylaws. After the October Board of Directors meeting, a proposal was made to change the wording of the bylaws that will allow the Board to continue to function. The current wording would change to allow the president to vote and that "A quorum is defined as ½ the number of voting Board Members rounded up to the nearest odd number to avoid tied votes."

Our current bylaws say the following:

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Robert's Rules of Order states that small boards such as ours may allow the President to vote and I think we should change that. Additionally, we need to redefine what constitutes a quorum in a way that avoids ties and is flexible to adjust the number of Board members.

On October 17,

Via email Michele Marsel moved that the HGMS Bylaws be amended as follows:

ARTICLE IV: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 2 - Meetings

The Board chooses the time, place, and format (in person or virtual) to meet. Seven Board members constitute a quorum. [CHANGE the preceding sentence to read: A Quorum is defined as one-half the number of voting Board Members rounded up to the nearest odd number to avoid tied votes.] Meetings may be held at the call of the President or at the request of any Board member.

All business coming before the Board will be decided by a majority vote of the Board members present if there is a quorum. [REMOVE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE] The President will only cast a vote in the event of a tie. Only the Board members have the right to vote at a Board meeting. Proxy voting will not be allowed. Special Meetings and voting via email will be allowed when pressing business decisions are required outside of normally scheduled Board Meetings. Special email meetings and votes will be subject to the same quorum and voting rules as regular Board Meetings.

Example of how the quorum will function:

- If we do not fill the 1st VP and Treasurer positions, then there will be nine voting Board members including the President. Half that number is 4.5 which would be rounded up to equal a quorum of five
- If we fill all positions and have eleven voting Board Members, half of that number is 5.5 and that would round up to a quorum of 7 (must be an odd number).

Discussion followed where concerns were raised about reducing the number of voting members and that the president would be able to vote in conditions other than to break a tie. Tom English asked If the BOD does not have a quorum can they get a consensus of what the board wants so the board can agree to wait for a quorum or abandon an idea that would not be passed with a quorum? President English reminded the audience that postponing decisions is what makes progress take months instead of weeks. That slow progress keeps people from wanting to participate in the Board. Sigrid Stewart was concerned that reducing the required number of people for a quorum would potentially allow decisions for the club to be made by as few as five people.

President English pointed out that if the decision to reduce the quorum is not passed tonight and we do not fill the open officer positions we will not be able to do business in January. She also commented that the way to avoid that is for more people to join the Board. President English suggested that a motion be passed at this meeting and the Board would consider these concerns towards reversing the motion in January.

President English asked for a motion to approve the Bylaws change.

Sarah Metsa moved to accept the proposal, Richard Good seconded the motion, 14 people attending approved, 2 approved by zoom, 2 were not in favor and 3 abstained.

Holiday Potluck Dinner and Auction, Saturday, December 10, 2022,

In place of the December General Meeting, we will have our Annual Holiday Party at the

This is a Potluck Dinner BYOB. HGMS provides the meat. Our great cooks provide the side dishes and desserts. Let Nancy English know what you are bringing.

We will need volunteers to help set up the tables, set out the food, and put it all back the way we found it. Contact Nancy at volunteercoordinator@hgms.org

Thank you to Fred Brueckner and Michele Marsal for preparing the Holiday Auction items' photographs to be advertised in the Sunday e-Blasts

NEW BUSINESS

President English asked for any New Business.

The next Zoom Board of Directors meeting will be on Tuesday, December 6, 2022, at 7:30 p.m.

The next Hybrid General Meeting will be on Tuesday, January 24, 2023, at 7:30 p.m.

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

Steve Blyskal showed minerals that he bought at our show and the Austin show.

Scolecite from India and many others.

Ray Kizer showed a stand with trilobites

Sharon Halton showed a framed holder and asked if the club should buy some for the members to buy.

Abdul Qasem Malikzad recently joined HGMS. Before the meeting began, he showed tourmaline and lapis lazuli that he mined in Afghanistan. He is trying to set up a way to sell these.

Drawing: Sandra Cline won the amethyst door prize and Estella Cuellar won the Michigan Thunder Egg slab.

Before we Adjourn:

Refreshments were provided by Foster Kneeland. This is his last meeting to feed us.

Be sure to thank him for the fine food he has provided in 2022. Neal Immega and Abdul Malikzad will provide refreshments in January.

President English asked that during the break attendees:

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

Thank the volunteers who made tonight possible.

Thank the volunteers who make all of what HGMS is available.

Adjourn: Sharon Halton moved to adjourn, and Sarah Metsa seconded it. The motion was passed, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Vice President Metsa introduced the Program: Hawaiian Volcanoes National Park presented by Sigrid Stewart

UPCOMING SHOWS

12/02/22 - 12/04/22

Dallas Christmas Bead & Jewelry Show

Grapevine Convention Center, 1210 S. Main St, Grapevine, Texas 76051

01/20/23 - 01/22/23

East Texas Gem & Mineral Society Show

Tyler Rose Garden Center, 420 Rose Park Drive, Tyler, Texas 75702

01/21/2023 - 01/22/2023

Fredericksburg Rockhounds Show

Hours: Sat 9:00-6:00 Sun 10:00-4:00

Lady Bird Johnson Park, 1606 S State Hwy 16

Fredericksburg, TX 78624

Website: <http://fredericksburgrockhounds.org/>

Shows Around the US - Dates (rockngem.com)

Always verify show times before traveling!

