# The BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

**The Newsletter of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society Houston, TX**

Volume XXXVII - No. 5 May 2006


## President's Message

*by Scott Singleton*
*HGMS President*

I was asked at the March General Meeting what the status was of our $675 donation to the Harrison County Gem and Mineral Society to help them recover from the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina in August 2005. I asked Phyllis George to investigate. The following e-mail chain is the result of her investigation. The two documents referred to in the text will be printed in the June issue due to lack of space in this issue.

Thursday, March 30, 2006 6:36 PM
To: Margaret Johnson, President of the Harrison County G & M Society
From: John Wright, Acting MS State Director

Hi Margaret,

Since Billy Woods moved to Oklahoma, I wanted to forward this on to you as I am

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## General Meeting Programs—April and May 2006

*by Matt Dillon*
*HGMS 1st Vice President*

**April General Meeting**: Dr. Richard G. Gordon, professor of quantitative tectonics in the Earth Sciences Department of Rice University, will speak on "hot spots"—sites of volcanism in the interior of tectonic plates or excessive volcanism along the boundaries of tectonic plates—and their relationship to the tectonic plates. Examples of these hot spots are Hawaii, Yellowstone Park, Iceland, and Java. He will also discuss the relative movement of hot spots.

**May General Meeting**: Inda Immega is a Master Docent at the Houston Museum of Natural Science, and she will speak on the lapidary and metal working of ancient Ur. Her talk will be based on the current exhibit at the HMNS, "The Royal Tombs of Ur," a series of stunning artifacts from ancient Mesopotamia. This will be a PowerPoint presentation, and she will bring some "show and tell" items from the exhibit.

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## Purpose of HGMS

The objectives of this Society are to promote the advancement of the knowledge and practice of the arts and sciences associated with the collecting of rocks, minerals, fossils, artifacts, and their identification and classification; the general lapidary art; the collecting and identification of gemstones; the designing and execution of jewelry or metalcraft; and to provide the opportunity to obtain, exchange, and exhibit specimens and rough or finished materials.

Membership dues are $30 for an adult membership, $40 for a couple, $50 for a family (including all children aged 5-18), and $8 for a youth membership (ages 5-18).

Advertising rates: $70 for 2 months, ¼ page; $150 for 6 months, ¼ page.

MEMBER: American Federation of Mineralogical Societies & South Central Federation of Mineral Societies.

All meetings are held at the Clubhouse located at 10805 Brooklet near the intersection of Highway 59 (Southwest Freeway) and Sam Houston Parkway (Beltway 8). See the calendar inside the back page for when the different Sections meet. The General Meeting is the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30. The HGMS Internet address is **http://www.hgms.org**.

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sure you can let the Houston club know what is going on. I am also attaching the MS State Director's Report that I submitted at the SFMS meeting this past weekend. Note:"Katrina losses for MS Gulf Coast G & M Society." Add one more home to the total loss numbers as Mae Kerlec's house was condemned and will be torn down instead of being repaired. Subtract one from the badly damaged numbers. We also found the club's cabbing machine, and Buddy thinks that he can repair it. I'll get a report out to all the MS clubs as soon as I can. The contractors finally finished our upstairs, and we are moving back into our bedrooms right now. I don't know where my notes from the SFMS meeting are. Hope to make the next meeting.

John Wright, Acting MS State Director

Friday, March 31, 2006 8:42 AM
Phyllis,
I talked to Margaret Johnson, President of the Harrison County G & M Society, last night by phone. I told her that I was forwarding your message and a copy of my Southeast Federation Mississippi State Director's Report. I am quite sure that she will get back to you with the information you requested. Margaret lost her home and is living in temporary quarters. She just recently got back online with e-mail capability. If you don't hear back from her in a reasonable time frame, let me know and I will contact her and get back to you.

The Civic Center where they met before the hurricane was severely damaged and we don't know when or even if it will be repaired. The club has been meeting in temporary facilities. I belong to both the Harrison County and Mississippi Gulf Coast Clubs. Unfortunately I have been able to attend only a few of the Harrison County club's meetings since Katrina, and I am not really up-to-date on their plans. It's very frustrating, but everything here seems to be moving at a snail's pace.

Please extend our thanks to your club members for their concern and assistance. It is greatly appreciated. I'm just sorry that I can't give you definite answers at this time, but hopefully you will hear from the President of the Harrison County G & M Society soon.

John Wright, Acting SFMS MS State Director

Friday, March 31, 2006 12:42 PM
Dear Ms George and Members of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society,
First I'd like to apologize for the delay in responding to you. As you know Billy Wood was handling the donations. He also was supposed to be sending Thank you cards. It was less than a month ago when he gave me all the names and addresses of clubs who have donated to our rebuilding effort. I am certain he was quite busy getting his home and life back together again.

I have attached a report of our club's losses, etc. that should tell you most of what you want to know.

As for the $675 you folks sent us, it has not been spent yet. Our plans are to purchase

at least one new Genie and one new faceting machine. We currently are talking with one of our show dealers who sells used and new equipment. We have told him we'd like one new and two used Genies and one new faceting machine and two used ones. We also told him we want one very good 8-inch trim saw, some templates, a dop pot; dop sticks, and wax. He currently is checking his stock to see what he has, and he is working up a price for us. As soon as this is accomplished, we will make a purchase. We plan to have a plaque made with the names of all our generous donors so we can hang it in our workshop and meeting place. We want to always remember them in prayer and thanksgiving. Yours will be at the top of the list.

We are all very grateful and appreciative of your kindness, efforts, and generosity.

We are not able to have our April 2006 show as there is no suitable available space, and no RV parks, campgrounds, or motel/hotel rooms are available for our dealers and visitors. We are planning to have one in 2007 and are working in that direction.

Would you like to exchange club newsletters with us??? *Editor's Note: I gave her an emphatic "Yes" for exchanging newsletters and sent the April 2006 BBG as a PDF file. I've not heard back.*

Gratefully yours,
Margaret Johnston, President & Bulletin Editor
Harrison County Gem & Mineral Society

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***April-May General Meeting Program Information continued from page 1***

The Museum will be exhibiting the grave furnishings of Queen Puabi (2500 BC), from the only intact tomb ever discovered from this point in history. If there is sufficient interest, in the near future Inda and others will arrange a special day at the Museum for the HGMS members to see this exhibit (as was done for the "Dinosaurs").

## Why Collect Microminerals?

*by Arthur Smith*
*Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society*

This question has been asked of me many times, and I think I have probably written about it in the BBG before, but since I keep getting asked, I will write about it again. The first thing is to know what a micromineral is. It is any specimen regardless of size that requires magnification to observe and study it. Pretty simple, the specimen can be as big as a baseball, but if magnification is required to see and study the individual crystals, it is a micromineral.

The next question is: what is a micromounter? A micromounter is somewhat of an artist or perhaps more like a professional picture framer who tries to highlight the best aspects of the crystal specimen. Actually though, it is this definition that separates a micromineral collector from a micromounter according to Quinte Wight (1993). A micromounter is a person who permanently mounts specimens on a pedestal in a box. The key here is *permanently*. The box and pedestal can be any size and made of any material.

Originally these boxes were cardboard, but now they generally are plastic. The plastic can be clear or any color, though flat black is the preferred color. The object of a good micromount is to have the specimen mounted near the top of the box so that it appears to be floating in air because you cannot see the black pedestal or black box background.

Many say that women make better micromounters than men because it often requires a lot of delicate work trimming and mounting the specimen, and I would agree with that. Some people use hinged boxes while others use the more standard black plastic box with a clear unhinged lid. I have done some micromounting, but I consider myself a micromineral collector because most of my specimens are not permanently mounted.

Why not? Well, very often I like to have the specimen available for photography or for analysis or to inspect portions of the specimen that normally do not show. If the specimen is permanently mounted, it can easily be damaged by removing it from the box and pedestal. I also do not always have the best side facing up. I mount the specimen to preserve it, and I also want to preserve as much of the associated minerals and matrix as possible. These may be particularly valuable if the minerals source is questioned. Now I mostly use the clear plastic boxes with a black paper liner, though I used to paint the boxes (except the lids) with a flat black paint. With the black paper liner, I attach the mineral to it with mineral tack or Elmer's glue and just pull it out of the box with some tweezers if I want to remove the specimen. The only place I know of where you can buy the paper liners is from Althor Products (www.althor.com or 800-688-2693).

I started micromineral collecting in 1970 using the 7/8" by 7/8" plastic boxes. However, I wish I had used at least the 1" by 1" boxes or the even larger hinged boxes because you can preserve more of the matrix. However, the hinged boxes take more storage space because of the hinges and front snaps..

There are many other advantages to micromineral collecting which I will list below.

- Microminerals are generally cheaper than larger specimens.
- Many specimens can be kept in a relatively small space.
- Many minerals usually or only have microscopic crystals
- You probably will have a greater variety of mineral species in your collection.
- Microminerals are easily shipped for trading, viewing or exchanging with other collectors.
- Many old localities that used to produce larger specimens now produce only microminerals.
- Undamaged specimens are demanded because they are more plentiful in microminerals.
- One large specimen can be broken down into many microspecimens.
- Large, old, damaged, and almost worthless specimens may have unexposed pockets of microcrystals.
- At times the castoff trimmings from larger specimens can yield a bonanza of microcrystals.

You will learn to recognize a great number of mineral species from handling, trim-

ming, and mounting microminerals.

If these are not enough reasons to collect microminerals, I could probably think of more.

The disadvantages to micromineral collecting are few, and probably the biggest barrier for micromineral collectors is that you have to invest in a binocular microscope. I suggest a good one that has a zoom lens with the highest magnification power above 50x.

When I first started in 1970, I had a discarded Texaco student microscope that only went up to 25x. I soon discovered that things were too fuzzy, so I sent it out for repair (which cost a couple of hundred dollars). Although that helped, I needed more magnification to see the smaller crystals. So in about 1972 I bought an American Optical binocular scope which had a magnification up to 50x. About that time I discovered some minute pockets in the syenite of the Diamond Jo quarry in Magnet Cove, Arkansas. The trouble was that most were just barely visible with my new microscope, and I was somewhat frustrated. I could see the bright orange labuntsovite crystals, but there were many paler crystals that were much harder to see. The delindeite I saw as pale brown crystals, but with a more powerful microscope, I could see that they were actually a pale pink.

So I upgraded again to a microscope with a magnification of up to 90x. Today a **good used** zoom binocular microscope costs about $500–$1000. A **good new** binocular microscope costs about $2000 up, depending on what goes with it and the model. If you are thinking of a used microscope, I would suggest Mineralogical Research (www.minresco.com). Either way, used or new, it is not a small investment, so do not do what I did so that you are continuously upgrading. Buy one a little better than you think you will need and probably one that you can adapt a camera to for taking photos. Photos are the easiest way to share your micro mineral treasures.

There are other things that I think are requirements for a micromineral collector. A good light source, preferably a fiber optic light with at least two flexible light heads projecting from the transformer, is a must today, particularly if you get into photography. These start at about $600. I am told that cheaper used ones can be purchased on eBay.

Other things that you will find useful are a good screw-type trimmer, nippers, tweezers, and corks or sticks as pedestals. Many dealers carry small supplies of corks, but if you want to buy corks in bulk, try the Expanko Cork Company, 1139 Phoenixville Pike, West Chester, PA 19380 (1-800-345-6202). They sell them in lots of 1000. XXX and XXX00 are two handy sizes. However, balsa wood also works well and easily can be trimmed and mounted as pedestals.

The two books listed as references are specifically on micromineral collecting and micromounting. They will give you more details and ideas for what you want to do. Spreckel's book is more basic, and Wight's is more in depth and up-to-date with a lot of historical data.

I have found that microscope examination, trimming, and mounting (or should I say boxing microminerals which is time consuming) generally does make you learn more about a specimen than you do when just buying it and putting it on a shelf or in a cabinet.

Generally location data and any other significant data can be put on the bottom of the box with a label. The top is usually reserved for the mineral name. However, you may use any part of the box to stick additional labels on with significant data including date, who you got it from, and even the price paid for it.

At this point I will add that many people mount their minerals on the inside of the top, so it becomes the bottom and the box itself becomes the top. Whatever works well for you is the way to go. Each method has its pros and cons.

The important thing is for you to enjoy and get some satisfaction out of what you are doing. If it becomes too much work and no enjoyment, rethink what and how you are doing it.

**References**:

Spreckels, M. L. 1965 *The Complete Guide to Micromounts.* Gembooks, Mentome, CA.

Wight, Quintin 1993 *Complete Book of Micromounting.* Mineralogical Record, Tucson, AZ.

## American Emerald!

*by Neal Immega, HMNS Docent*
*with Mark Mauthner, HMNS Curator*
*Members of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society*

In case you have been living under a rock, this was the year of the Houston Museum of Natural Science *Romancing the Stone* Gala in honor of the newly acquired 1,869-carat emerald crystal—and what an emerald it is. The specimen is now on display in the Cullen Hall of Gems and Minerals, and you *have* to see it. There is no need for neon hype or brass bands. This crystal creates its own glamour, and you will catch your breath in awe when you see it. Let me just say very quietly that this specimen is likely the best—in every sense of the word—mineral on display in the entire hall. Let's analyze this specimen and see what makes it special.

**Color and intensity**: Color is judged on whether the emerald has blue overtones, and the ideal color is that

of the Colombian emeralds. Intensity is how light or dark the specimen looks. What looks good in a small, faceted stone would be much too dark in a huge crystal like this one. The color and intensity of our specimen are ideal for such a big crystal. The same size crystal of the best cutting quality would be so dark that it would have very little sparkle.

**Clarity**: A cold-hearted jeweler would have cut a big, flawless stone out of the tip of this crystal. It is a credit to the finder that it was sold as a specimen. By the way, there are almost NO big and flawless emeralds of excellent color on the market, and those that exist are priced accordingly.

**Luster**: Notice that the crystal faces are not simply smooth, flat surfaces; rather, they are covered with small bumps. All minerals grow by nucleation around a spiral dislocation in the crystal structure, producing these bumps that are called "growth hillocks." These bumpy growths enhance the "sparkle" of the specimen. The luster of our emerald is extraordinary.

**Zoning**: Fortunately for specimen collectors and unfortunately for jewelers, emerald crystals are frequently so zoned (that is, they show concentric layers of different compositions and colors) that they cannot be cut into gemstones. To see what I am talking about, go to Case 4, stand in the corner on the right side, and look at the top of the Colombian emerald. The crystal has a pale, milky center and a beautiful green rind. It cannot be cut into jewelry, but it makes a lovely specimen. The tip of the new crystal is not zoned, and it makes a truly gorgeous specimen.

**Size**: Does size really matter? Not to a mineralogist, but if you collect statistics, Museum President Joel Bartsch's book, *Masterpieces of the Mineral World*, documents the emerald's weight at 1869 carats (373.8g—slightly heavier than a can of pop), which makes it the largest emerald ever found in North America.

**Locality**: Mineral collectors prize specimens from an unusual locality. Our prize was found near the town of Hiddenite, North Carolina (15 miles west of the intersection of Hwy 77 and Hwy 40). Thomas Edison sent William Earl Hidden to North Carolina to find platinum deposits for electric light bulb filaments in 1879. Instead, Mr. Hidden got a lovely green spodumene (and a town) named after himself. We have the purple variety of spodumene, called kunzite, in our hall (Cases 66, 122, 152).

The area around Hiddenite in Alexander County, North Carolina, has so far been the most important producer of emerald in North America. This occurrence was first recorded in 1875 by John Adlai Stephenson, who did not, it seems, actually collect the specimens, but having heard of farmers finding "green bolts," advertised an offer to purchase the "bolts" if they were of at least finger-size and good quality in terms of habit and clarity. Locals brought him many specimens, and he had assembled a fair collection by the time it was seen by William Hidden in September of 1879.

It was Hidden, however, who first attempted a commercial exploitation of the deposits in 1880. The localities near Shelby in Cleveland County and at Big Crabtree Mountain near Spruce Pine, Mitchell County, have also produced emerald crystals though not nearly as prolifically or of the quality found at the Hiddenite localities.

**Association**: The emerald sits among pale rhombohedrons of dolomite (educated guess by Curator Mark Mauthner) and mica. I offered to do the acid test (a drop of dilute HCl will make calcite fizz but not dolomite), but Mark told me that there would always be a piece of armor Plexiglas between that matrix and me. Colombian emeralds are found with similar looking calcite but not with the beautiful crystals of ours.

**Hydrothermal vs Pegmatitic**: Here's a quick course in Mineral Emplacement 101. If you could watch a 100 cubic mile blob of granite crystallize, you would notice that the last little bit of molten material includes lots of lithium, boron, beryllium, fluorine, sodium, tin, tungsten, and uranium, plus a fair bit of water along with the usual silica. It will be very hot, and the melt will be very fluid. When this mix is pushed out into the surrounding rocks away from the granite mass, it may solidify into a coarse-grained rock called a pegmatite.

Crystals can grow substantially larger in a fluid melt like this than in granite. The water-rich melt may be too dilute to form enough crystals to fill the space that it is pushed into, *i.e*. there could be crystal pockets. Lots of the mineral specimens seen in the hall have "grown" into such pockets. If you drive to Mason, Texas, you will see in the highway road cuts what looks like coarse-grained granite injected into the limestone. These are simple quartz-feldspar pegmatites. In rare cases, the pegmatite carried enough fluorine to crystallize out topaz. See Case 144 for the best Texas mineral specimen, a topaz from Mason.

Pegmatites of the Black Hills of South Dakota, more complex than those of Texas, carry enough beryllium to be commercial deposits of beryl. That beryl frequently is opaque pale green or bluish in color. Remember that blue beryl is called aquamarine and grass green beryl is called emerald, but pale-greenish to colorless, milky beryl is just ore. The base material is beryllium aluminum silicate, colored by trace impurities. Cases 64, 117, 118, and 129 contain some of the colors of beryl that are NOT emerald. Only beryl that grows in a cavity is likely to be clear and gemmy.

It all comes down to temperature. If the melt is very hot, then high-temperature minerals will crystallize from it. Farther away from the parent granite, the melt is cool enough to deposit things like dolomite. So, our new specimen is likely formed from hydrothermal deposition. It was found in a cavity 12 feet across that was filled with dolomite, pyrite, and rutile crystals and just two emerald crystals.

**Show Me the Green**: The people who grow synthetic emerald crystals have found that it is necessary to have both chromium and vanadium in trace amounts in the hydrothermal solution to get a grass green beryl. In nature, those conditions are not all that common. Most pegmatites are derived from granite and contain almost no chromium. That is why there are no emerald mines in South Dakota. In Hiddenite, the solutions extracted some chromium when they came into contact with dark-colored rocks called mica schist (derived from oceanic basalt or mantle material).

**Colombian Emerald**: The Colombian emeralds (Cases 4, 90, 92) also came from hydrothermal solutions. The hot solutions were injected into black, metal or organic-rich shales and limestones and picked up some chromium in the process. The mineral-

ogy is very strange because the emeralds are found in association with calcite and pyrite. They also have inclusions of carbon. These deposits are not nearly as hot as pegmatite and indeed are on the cool end of what is called hydrothermal. The presence of pyrite is key to the good color of Colombian emerald. If iron is present in the crystal, the color is decidedly blue green—sulfur will bind strongly to the iron and keep it out of the emerald.

**Nigerian Emerald**: We have a lovely crystal from Nigeria (Case 93). It is from a true pegmatite, and notice that its color is a bit bluish. There is apparently no sulfur in the melt to form pyrite and keep the iron from "doping" the crystal, thereby causing a blue color. You decide if this color is green enough to qualify as an emerald. This answer generally breaks down to the sellers vs the buyers.

**Paleontology and Emeralds**: As the most dinosaur-like docent (or is it the docent who most likes dinosaurs?), I feel the need to "paleoize" the mineral hall. Well, I found a report, with photos, of Colombian gastropods (snails) that have been replaced by emerald. This very interesting occurrence indicates that hydrothermal processes can operate at very low temperatures, otherwise the solutions carrying the emerald would have destroyed the fossils in the limestone. Wouldn't one of these make a terrific addition to the mineral hall?

**References**:
Put *spiral dislocations* or *growth hillocks* into Google and click on images to see how the bumps appear on the crystal face.

Put *emerald (gastropods OR gastropod)* into Google to see this unusual fossil specimen.

The photograph used is from *Masterpieces of the Mineral World* by Wendell E. Wilson and Joel A. Bartsch, with Mark Mauthner. Published by The Houston Museum of Natural Science and The Mineralogical Record. – available from the HMNS gift shop.

An excellent reference to emerald specimens is "*Emeralds of the World*" extra Lapis English #2, a special report in English on emeralds published by the German mineral magazine *Lapis*.

## Enameling Classes Forming

*by Patty Scott*

The HGMS enameling classes meet on Sundays from 1–4 p.m. for six weeks. The Beginner Session meets from June 4–July 9, and the Intermediate Session meets from July 16–August 20. The classes are limited to six students, and the fee is $180. HGMS provides the supplies. For more information, check the HGMS Web site <www.hgms.org> and click on **Class Descriptions** and **Class Schedules**.

## Understanding the Geological Time Scale

*(© 2006) by Terrell Wm. "Terry" Proctor, J.D.*
*Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society*
*Curator Proctor Museum of Natural Science*

**What is the Geological Time Scale, and of what does it consist? What are Eras, Periods, Epochs, and Aeons (Eons)?**

Earth scientists have done extensive study and testing over many years using various means (many of which overlap and therefore double-check each other) and have determined that the Earth is approximately 4,600,000,000 years old. See "Showing Your Age" at http://www.proctormuseum.us/Articles/articlesshowage.htm for information on how to tell the age of formations, an award winning article by this author. Since 4.6 billion years is a very long period of time, earth scientists have broken the 4.6 billion years down into units called geological ages. These geological ages are determined by a number of factors and are not just an arbitrary number of years. Geological time is divided into various units of time.

**EONs** (or Aeons): There are two Eons. The Precambrian Eon commenced at the formation of the Earth and ended when fossils became abundant in rocks-about 570,000,000 years ago (570 MYBP, i.e. million years before present). The other eon is the Phanerozoic Eon which commenced at the close of the Precambrian Eon and exists to the present.

**ERAs**: There are five major geological categories called Eras in some tables and six in others. Starting at the time of the formation of the Earth are the two or three earliest eras, called the Precambrian Eras.

1 The Hadean Era, which is the time frame dating from the formation of the Earth, moon, and other solar planets, starting at 4,600,000,000 (4.6 BYBP) to 3.8 BYBP

2 Archezoic Era (or Archean) from 3.8 BYBP to 2.4 BYBP

3 Proterozoic Era from 2.4 BYBP to 570 MYBP (up to the Cambrian Era).

The other three eras are the Paleozoic, Mesozoic, and Cenozoic, which are the Cambrian and post-Cambrian eras. We presently live in the Cenozoic Era which has existed for a very long period of time. These five or six eras also take us from the formation of the Earth to the present.

Eras are usually separated from one another by intervals of mountain building called geologic revolutions and included great forces in and upon Earth that resulted in land elevation, erosion, the folding of land, and faults (slippage of one section from another). These periods of activity (called diastrophic activity) are usually accompanied by vulcanism or by igneous intrusion. Magma and subcrustal activity result in crustal changes. During these diastrophic activities, the land rises.

Then the crust undergoes erosion by water, wind, and other forces upon the surface of the Earth, and sediments (i.e. portions of the crust surface broken up by such forces)

are carried away by water, wind, and other forces, and redeposited elsewhere. A good example is the Mississippi River where sediments from a good portion of the United States are washed gradually down the river and out into the Gulf of Mexico in what is called an alluvial fan (i.e. the sediment makes a fan-shaped deposition into the Gulf).

This forms new land areas and can also wipe out and carry away old land areas. These breaks or gaps in the deposition of the strata are called unconformities. During Eras, there is a great amount of stability of the Earth's crust and of the flora (plant life) and fauna (animal life) types. However, there are new forms of plant and animal life that evolve from older species while other species of each become extinct during an Era. The Eras are further divided into Periods.

**PERIODs**: The following are the periods within the Cambrian and post-Cambrian eras.

- **Paleozoic**: Cambrian; Ordovician; Silurian; Devonian; Mississippian; Pennsylvanian; and Permian
- In some countries the Mississippian and Pennsylvanian Periods are jointly called the Carboniferous Period (see below)
- **Mesozoic**: Triassic; Jurassic; and Cretaceous
- **Cenozoic**: Tertiary and Quaternary

These Periods are time frames or systems of rock formations in which minor or localized earth movement occur. In short, overall they are less dramatic than the Eras.

Each Period is characterized by certain fossils which come into being during that Period. The fossils are distinctive and are distributed widely in many places on Earth or are assembled worldwide. This makes possible a comparison or correlation of these identical or very similar fossils from place to place around the Earth. Scientists may determine the age of certain geological formations because of the similarities or virtual identity of these fossils. These are called index fossils, marker fossils, or guide fossils. See the description of index fossils at

http://www.proctormuseum.us/Fossils/Index-fossils/indexfossils.htm.

**EPOCHs**: Each of the above Periods is divided into smaller geological categories called Epochs. During these epochs, deposition of individual rock formations or groups of formations, including any fossil remains, takes place on the land surface or on the floor of seas, lakes, and other bodies of water. The Periods of the Paleozoic and Mesozoic are divided into epochs simply called "Early," "Middle," and "Late," or into "Early" and "Late." The Cenozoic Periods are divided into epochs with distinctive names:

- **Tertiary**: Paleocene; Eocene; Oligocene; Miocene; and Pliocene
- **Quaternary**: Pleistocene and Holocene (or recent)
- **Ages & Stages**: Epochs may be broken down further into ages and stages, but we will not go into these smaller units at this time.

Geological periods of time are blocks of historical time, and a name is assigned by earth scientists to each block. These periods of time are not just cut into even pieces of time but are arranged by intervals of dramatic changes upon Earth. This grouping by

name has a purpose, and each covers a large historical time period of the Earth. The units of time usually run millions of years each. In each historical time grouping, there are some similarities or a period of time between great changes on Earth (or both). Hence the start of a historical time unit starts with some change and ends with another change in the condition of the Earth.

These changes may be mass extinctions, changes in the geological make-up of the Earth (possibly massive land movements such as tectonic plate movements or rising of mountains), changes in the temperature or water-earth relationship, or other factors which dramatically change the environment of the Earth.

Units of time set out in the Geological Time Scale are shown with a "margin of error" which varies with different units of historical time depending upon various earth scientists' ability to obtain accurate readings of the antiquity of things in that Geological age unit.

Various events create these divisions in geological time. For instance at the dividing line between the Cretaceous Period and Tertiary Period (called the K-T boundary), which was about 66,400,000 years before the present (66.4 MYBP), there was a worldwide incident which led to the extinction of a large share of the species on earth, land, and sea. For instance the dinosaurs lived during part of the Triassic, the Jurassic, and the Cretaceous Periods. Then they died out at the K-T Boundary about 66.4 MYBP.

There are various theories of what caused this. Virtually all scientists around the world accept at least in part the theory that one of the major causations for that extinction was a huge meteorite that fell to earth and landed near the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico. The theory is that this caused a violent explosion, tremendous heat in an extensive area, followed by a worldwide dust cloud that circled the Earth for some time. This led to a nuclear winter and to the devastating results from that dust cloud and from other effects of the collision of the meteorite with Earth.

The dust cloud would have killed vegetation upon which plant eating animals lived including plant eating dinosaurs. This in turn resulted in the death of meat eating animals, also including dinosaurs, which then had no plant eating animals to eat and live upon. Some things survived, but a large percentage of the species on Earth at that time became extinct.

Support for this theory comes from an analysis of an element called iridium which is fairly rare on Earth but is found in some meteorites. All over the Earth, at around 65 MYBP, there is an iridium layer present. Pictured with this article is a Triceratops metatarsal (foot bone) and a femur (leg bone) found by Proctor Museum of Natural Science (PMNS) President Terry Brawner and PMNS Curator Terry Proctor in Montana, in August, 2005.

Around the dig area where these dinosaur bones were found in the Hell Creek formation, in Eastern Montana, are signs of a dark layer in the otherwise light-colored matrix. It is unclear at this writing whether this layer has anything to do with the K-T boundary.

It has taken several hundred years and untold hours of work and sweat by scientists around the world to develop these geological age designations and to determine the basis for each and what happened during that time.

The names of geological ages vary somewhat in different countries and regions on the Earth. For instance in England, the Geological Time Scale from 360 to 286 MYBP is most often called the Carboniferous Era. In the United States, that same period is broken into two Periods:
1. The Mississippian Period (360 to 320 MYBP)
2. The Pennsylvanian Period (320 to 286 MYBP)

Other geological scales show the Carboniferous from 354 to 290 MYBP.

Therefore, you may see the same time periods called different things on different charts. Most charts are fairly similar throughout the earth. The naming of the most ancient geological periods was done most recently. Also charts vary in the amount of detail, some showing broad groupings and others much more detailed.

## Photos

#1. Earth crust folded by forces of nature on the rocks. An example of what tectonic plate movement and other crustal forces can cause to hard rock. Photo by Terry Proctor

See next page for #2 and #3 captions

#2.Triceratops metatarsal (foot bone). eArt Scan by Terry Proctor

#3. Triceratops femur (leg bone) in situ (in the matrix) from which it had to be extricated and will then have to be put back together as it would have been when first deposited at the death of the dinosaur). Photo by Terry Proctor

#4. Curator Terry Proctor with cap rock which protected the matrix pedestal below it from erosion. Photo by Terry Brawner.

#5. Dinosaur fossil terrain - Hell River formation Eastern Montana. Photo by Terry Brawner

#6 Cap rock on top of pedestal, protecting the pedestal from the otherwise extensive erosion.

## History of the HGMS Annual Show--Part 1

*by Scott Singleton*
*HGMS President*

**Prolog**: This is a history of the HGMS annual show. However because the show is a function of the Society, it is not always possible to separate one from the other in an historical accounting. This is particularly true in the early days when the show was a small affair held by a much smaller society. As the Society grew, functions were separated into committees who were responsible for them. But even then, some Society decisions were so far-reaching that they affected the show in one way or another. In these cases, the events or decisions will be discussed only inasmuch as is necessary to lay the groundwork for a full understanding of the situation surrounding the show.

Because the annual show has been occurring for over a half century, its history could become very unwieldy if not broken up into digestible chunks. Thus, I will split this accounting into several articles whose covered periods are dictated by logical breaks in the historical progression of the show. These breaks and article titles are as follows:

PART 1: 1948-1968 – Early Days
PART 2: 1969-1977 – Rise to Prominence
PART 3: 1978-1989 – On Top of the World
PART 4: 1990-2000 – Fall From Grace
PART 5: 2001-Present – The Phoenix

*(Addendum: I will shortly be writing Parts 2 and 3. I have talked to a number of you out there who were around during those days, but it's growing increasingly difficult to find anyone who was here prior to 1980. If you were around prior to 1990 or 1980, I would like to talk with you. Please let me know via e-mail [fossilwood@houston.rr.com] or phone [713-664-9033], and I'll make arrangements to discuss your recollections with you. Thanks in advance!)*

### PART 1: 1948-1968 – Early Days

**Formation of a Society**: In October of 1942, Mr. W. V. Vietti transferred back to Houston after an assignment in Colombia as a production engineer for The Texas Company (which changed its name in 1959 to Texaco, Inc.). He started collecting gemstones and rough as best he could, which was not easy during the war. It apparently was even more difficult to find lapidary equipment, and his first was a homemade arbor and wheels that a friend sold him. He was advised to wait until the end of the war before trying to organize any sort of group of like-minded hobbyists. He became friends with Jerrie Swain and her husband, St. Elmo Swain, after his release from the armed forces. St. Elmo was a silversmith and a machinist with Humble Oil.

Together they plotted to form a rockhound club. Jerrie, who also worked in the Humble Oil offices, arranged for notices and photos to be printed in the Houston Post. In early November of 1948, an organizational meeting was held in the Swain home. About 10 people showed up, and that was enough to set up an organization. The second organi-

zational meeting was held on December 3, 1948, again at the Swain "studio." About 26 people attended. They agreed on a plan whereby Mr. Vietti would submit a formal notice of organization to the State Mineral Society of Texas (later changed to the Texas State Federation of Mineralogical Societies), a necessary step since its organization predated Houston's by several years.

This letter was sent on December 7, 1948, and that same day the first official meeting of the Houston Rock and Lapidary Club was held at the Vietti residence. (The original name was Houston Lapidary Club, but "Rock" was added in order to attract collectors). This meeting was attended by 28 people who became charter members in the new Society after paying initial dues of $7.00. Mr. Vietti then drew up a set of bylaws and mailed it to the charter members. (This was the origin of the same bylaws we use today). The bylaws were approved at the second official meeting of the HR&LC on January 7, 1949, and a Society was born. Meetings were held at the Houston Public Library at McKinney Ave. starting with this second official meeting and continuing until 1955.

Meetings were well attended in 1949. There were few formal programs, but members were content to share knowledge and experience about their hobby (which was one of the early primary functions of the new Society). Usually there were swaps and informal sales of personal material at meetings.

**The First Exhibits**: Attendance dropped off in 1950, and it became apparent the new Society would have to find some activities in which to engage. One was a Christmas dinner which ended up being a traditional annual activity of the club. Also, since meetings were held at the library, it was a natural fit for members to have exhibitions there. The first exhibit was held in 1950 (dates were not specified). The second was held for the month of May, 1951. Interestingly, by this time four members had "studios" (i.e. lapidary workrooms), including Mr. Vietti and Mr. Swain. Members were invited to socialize at these shops, and the response was good.

The library exhibit was held for the month of April in 1952. Mr. Vietti announced in June that the State Mineralogy Show (held jointly with the Rocky Mountain Federation of Mineralogical Societies Show) would be held in Houston in early May, 1953 (at the Sam Houston Coliseum), and a motion was passed that the club would act as host. (Mr. Vietti was president of the State Society in 1953, and thus he was able to secure Houston as the site of the annual show that year). The library exhibit was moved to the month of April so the club exhibits could be used for the show. Mr. Ken Fry (president, 1951, and owner of one of the 4 "studios," also a vice president in the State Society) was the show chairman. A sapphire was donated for the door prize and was mounted.

Unfortunately, no club records exist of the show but several references allow us to piece together some of the details. The list of show committee personnel posted in the State Society's publication (The Mineral Hobbyist) consisted mostly of charter members of the Houston club. Mrs. Massingill (secretary, 1951-1955, and the club historian until 1970) noted that it was the first show if its kind in Houston and that attendance was good (she handled registrations at the show). It was a dealer show, and it

had competitive exhibits. The show's sponsors (the State Society and the Rocky Mountain Society) gave our club $200 in November, 1953 as a gift for our participation. It seems clear that, while we organized the show and supplied personnel to run it, we were doing this as members of the State Society, not as members of the Houston club. Our financial records indicate we did not incur any financial liability in the event nor did we take in proceeds, except for the $200 gift.

In 1954, the club authorized payment to the Odessa club to construct four cases for us so we could exhibit at the state show in Odessa that year. The library exhibit was already booked for May, and we could not change it so that the library material could be used in the Odessa show (also in May). In September, Mr. Fry led a discussion regarding organizing a hobby show for the city. The idea met with the approval of the members at the meeting. It was agreed that it would be for exhibitors; no dealers would be allowed. However, no vote was taken so no action was initiated.

**The Houston Gem and Mineral Society**: 1955 was a busy year for the budding club. In January the club was invited to participate in the International Flower and Garden Show to be held in the Coliseum in early March and to assist in the planning of this event. The club agreed to do so. Mrs. Eleanor Smith was appointed chairperson of the committee to head that effort. In February, she organized another committee to decide on the design specs of cases to be built to hold club exhibits. Six were constructed in February for $99.30, making a total of 10 cases owned by the club. The Garden Show went off well, with the club helping to sell tickets and earning $40 from ticket sales. Our exhibit generated a lot of interest. But it was apparent the club would need to rethink its financial strategy as there was $124.50 in expenses on the $40 return.

In April, Mr. Vietti proposed several changes to the bylaws, among them a name change to **The Houston Gem and Mineral Society**. These were approved. Subsequently at the state show in Corpus Christi, the regional society changed its name to The Texas Federation of Mineralogical Societies. Our club helped rewrite the constitution of that society.

In October, the club was invited to participate in the Men's Garden Club Show in the Garden Center at Herman Park in November. This was approved and we did so, using our new cases. There was no financial income or outlay for this show.

In January of 1956, permanent standing committees were approved and formed for the first time. Among these was a Display Committee that was in charge of exhibits the club placed in various shows, with Mrs. Myra Byrd being the first chairperson. Among the first responsibilities of this new committee were the organization of our exhibits for the library and the Flower and Garden Show, both to be held in April. A separate committee was formed to head up a "sales" booth at this show. Members were requested to donate material (jewelry, slabs, etc.) for the booth.

It was a big success. The booth generated $207 net profit on expenses of $74. Following the show, discussions were held regarding the need to generate our own publicity for the event and to appoint a display committee well in advance of the show. This was

*History of the HGMS Annual Show continued on page 43*

## Springtime—A "Young" Man's Fancy Turns To Field Trips!

*by Stanley Perkins*
*Member of the Houston Gem and Mineral Society*

We all like field trips—getting out into the countryside with our friends and companions. Trips that might take only a few hours or several days require the same basic planning. I hope to examine just what is necessary to have a fun, safe outing in Texas.

The first item on your list should be excellent maps of the areas where you plan to collect. If you plan to travel highways or country roads, this might consist of a good, recent road atlas of the state. Highway maps are not very useful. If you plan to hike into your collecting area, take a topographic map. Study the map! If you've never tried to navigate using a map and compass, perhaps you should take an orienteering course. A GPS unit can save some time, but remember the unit runs on batteries! No spare batteries and the GPS becomes a fishing sinker! Carry a backup compass.

Clothing for Texas in the spring is usually casual: shorts, short sleeve shirt, and tennis shoes. Unless you're the Crocodile Hunter, stick to long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and hiking boots. A sweater or slicker carried in your pack could save you if you get caught out after dark. Dress in layers, and wear a cap or hat! A norther blowing in can make your day miserable. You can take clothing off, but there are no stores in the wilderness.

Water is the most important item to carry with you. You need several quarts of water per day in hot weather. Today the hiker has the advantage of wearing his water in his backpack. Flexible water bags with 2–3 liters of water will slip into the smallest backpack. I carry a small water-purifying device when I know standing water is available. I also have water purification tablets in my survival kit.

Signaling devices are important to have with you. A whistle and a mirror take up little space in your kit. A cell phone is a modern device that has saved numerous people. Make sure your phone will work in the areas where you will find yourself. Protect the unit with a plastic bag, and make sure the unit is completely charged prior to leaving the car.

I carry two knives when I'm out and about. I have a **good** multipurpose tool in a case on my belt and either a large folding knife or a sheath knife in my pack. I base my knife choice on the environment where I plan to hike. My survival kit also has a small folding knife for emergencies.

I have mentioned my survival kit several times. This is something that I carry in my truck wherever I go. My kit is stored in a bright red fanny pack. Most of the supplies will fit in a pocket in my cargo pants or a vest pocket. The following is a general list of the contents:

- 1 fishing kit: hooks, line, sinkers, wire snares
- 1 first aid kit: band-aids, iodine (also good to purify water!!)
  - Imodium, aspirin, tea bags, large compression bandage,
  - Ace wrap, tape, and soap
- 1 spare compass
- 1 Coast Guard approved whistle
- 1 Signal Mirror
- 1 small folding knife extra sharp

- 1 space blanket
- 1 bivy-sack type space blanket
- 2 large black heavy-duty plastic bags
- 2–3 large gallon-sized zip lock bags
- 1 water purifying straw device
- 1 bottle water purifying pills
- 2 containers 50–100 waterproof and wind proof matches
- 3 film canisters filled with cotton balls and petroleum jelly

- 1 magnesium fire starter with two duct-taped hacksaw blades
- 1 zip lock baggie filled with charred cotton for fire starting
- 1 small flashlight and two sets of batteries

Everything inside is sealed in heavy-duty zip-lock bags and thus is waterproofed. Bags can be used to carry or treat water. Everything in the kit can serve a number of purposes. Additional items can be added: personal medications, insect repellant, spare glasses, or other similar items.

**Food**: well, you aren't going to starve to death before you die of thirst, so use the space for water. You might toss in a couple of energy bars (yuck) or tropical chocolate (yum!). I often carry an old GI canteen complete with cup and stove. I keep sugar (piloncillo cone or brick) and tea bags for a boil up.

This covers what to carry; the next section covers what to do in emergencies.

## Springtime Part Two: Surviving Your Field Trip

The earlier section discussed what to carry on a field trip. I will now discuss why. We all like to think that we are prepared for any eventuality. I would like to warn you that most people are not ready to face a survival situation. To illustrate this, I would like to tell you a sad but true story about two men and a hunting trip.

It was deer season in Texas. Two men made a decision to go for deer in the Trinity River bottoms near their home. They both had hunted this area for years and knew the area well. The weather was mild, so they were dressed in jeans, shirts, and light jackets. Both carried rifles and ammo. They left their vehicle and walked into the woods for a couple of hours of hunting. They walked and walked. The bottoms had lots of standing water from recent flooding. The men had to walk around this water and the piles of debris left by the flood. They soon found themselves confused and lost. Night soon found the two men tired, wet, cold and thoroughly lost in their own back yard. What happened next broke all the rules of survival.

One man was too tired to go on. He sat down and told his friend to keep on going. His friend struggled through the night and finally stumbled on the road. He found their vehicle and went for help. The other man was finally found—dead from exposure.

What did they do wrong? Well first they weren't as familiar with the area as they thought. Changes brought on by the flooding changed what had been familiar territory. They had no map, no compass, and no one knew where they were. They did not build a fire or attempt to signal with their rifles. Finally the men separated and halved their chances of survival.

That can never happen to me! I'm careful and never go very far from the road. Well, if no one knows where you're going, who's coming to look for you if you go around that bend in the creek and break a leg? Prepare your trip carefully, and let friends know where you're going and when you're coming back. Leave a note on the dash so the Highway Patrol can begin looking for you when they find your car. Carry that cell phone or a walkie-talkie (leave the second with the note). Try to go with a partner and stay together.

If something happens, stay together. Work on getting the injured person to safety if possible but be prepared to hunker down and wait for help. Wandering about does not help rescuers to find you.

If lost, follow the old but reliable rule. Sit down, make a fire, make a cup of tea, and think about your options. If you do this you are less likely to make unwise decisions. Also you have most of the basics of a night camp—fire and food. Shelter comes next.

Be original and use the materials available to you to create shelter. In Texas, avoid washes and ravines because of the danger of flash floods. Do not shelter along creek beds or creeks for the same reason. Avoid tall trees in lightning storms for obvious reasons. Caves and overhangs should be inspected for prior occupants. Texas still has snakes, centipedes, scorpions, and cougars. Skunks are also unwelcome neighbors. Old tree limbs, leaves, and stones can produce a good warm retreat if carefully constructed. Watch that fire though! I carry a bivy sack in my kit for just such an eventu-

ality. I slide my lower body into the sack and pull the poncho over my head. The leaf bed insulates your body from the cold earth. Bring enough fire wood to last the night before dark. Snakes come out at dusk and you don't want to wander around in the dark looking for wood!

Water is a precious commodity, much more important than food. Texas can be water rich or water poor. Be prepared for the area in which you plan to collect. In a worst-case scenario, it is better to drink the water and survive with Giardia than to die of thirst. I carry a portable straw with a filter built in to drink just such water. Filter the large bits through your sock then sip the straw and drink filtered water. Other pump devices are available but at a greater expense. Water can also be boiled or treated with chemicals such as bleach, iodine, or various commercial water treatments.

Fire stirs the heart strings and makes us feel safer! Fires can be started using a number of different techniques. The Indians used flint and bow or hand drills to make fire. We have an advantage in that we have access to matches, butane lighters, or magnesium striker sets to make fire. A little fire starter material such a charred cotton cloth can help.

Be safe! Be prepared! Have fun!

## The Ryme of the Ancient Faceter

*anonymous*
*from the United States Faceter's Guild*
*http://www.usfacetersguild.org/*
*Submitted to the BBG by Stan Perkins*

It was Friday Eve and the lights were low,
And the last lap spun at the Tucson Show.
I was putting a sunstone safe from harm
When a gaunt old timer took hold of my arm.
I said "Let me go!" He said "Have you seen
A tricksy gem called Tourmaline?"
His gaze went far and I filled with dread
That I'd miss the cold chicken with apple dyed red.
He said "Years ago…I was not this wreck..
I was rich and I bought me an UltraTec.
I gave her blue stones, as a young man must,
But she said "Your diamond is just grey dust!"
I gave more than love to that Tourmaline,
But she found some guy with a Monster Machine.
I was scared, so I yelled "Will you let me go
If I tell where she is, which I happen to know?"
The cadaver gripped me with iron claw…
"She's workin' a jamb-peg in Jaipur!"
Like the sigh of a ghost the man was gone,
But he left in my hand a token that shone
With the blue of heaven that all men crave,
And lo! Every facet was cut concave…

## Clubhouse Deed Missing

**Urgent!** We are missing the original deed to the clubhouse. If you have it, please give it to a Board member so it can be put with our records.

## Day Light Section (March Meeting)

*by Frances Arrighi*

Eleven members attended the 13 March, 2006 meeting of the Day Light Section. A number of members finished polishing their agate burnishers and glued them into the handles with a fast acting epoxy. We used #l and #2 file handles. These can be purchased at most hardware stores. These burnishers are to be used in the technique of Keum Boo. We will probably do it early next year.

At the 10 April, 2006, meeting we are going to learn the proper way to string and knot pearls and other beads. Our program will be conducted by Gene Rooney, who is a graduate gemologist. He has worked with pearls for over 20 years. We look forward to his program and also meeting him. We thank him very much for his efforts.

When my data was transferred to my new computer, some went to My Files and some went to My Documents. Some of the files that had been in My Files in the old computer were now in My Documents. This happened to the report for the April BBG. The report for the March BBG was sent to Phyllis a second time, and the report for the April BBG was not sent or printed. It is now below.

## Day Light Section (February Meeting)

*by Frances Arrighi*

Twelve members attended the February meeting of the Day Light Section. We started to grind and polish our agate burnishers, which eventually will be used for the technique of Keum Boo. At the March meeting we will continue working on the burnishers. The handles have been purchased, and I hope some members will be ready to glue the agate into the handle.

The program for the April meeting is open. At the May meeting we are going to view a video on Mokume Gane. Professor Link will conduct our summer meetings.

## Scheduled Programs for Day Light Section

*by Sunday Bennett*

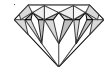
**May 15**: A video presentation of Mokume-Gane, an oriental metal art form that Val Link will teach during the summer months to the Daylight Section.

**June12**, **July 10**, and **August 14**: All these meetings will be learning and working with the Mokume-Gane as taught by Val Link.

**September 11**: Bead Wrapping Cabochons taught by Cheryl Norwood, artist and jewelry maker

## Faceting Section

*April 11, 2006*
*by Sunday Bennett*



The meeting was brought to order at 7:35 p.m. by Rusty Bennett, Chairperson.

**Old Business**:
Wayne Barnett moved to take Dick Twardowski off as a signer for the Faceting Section bank account and to substitute Cathy Konkle. Karen Burns seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Financial Report**: The silent auction brought in $35 dollars. $850 is the current bank balance.

Work continues on determining how to replace the single speed controls with variable speed on two older faceting machines. Tom Wright and Wayne Barnett are looking into the matter. At the moment the technique is to use the older machines for rough cutting and the newer machines for the latter stages of polishing.

Rusty Bennett and Matt Phillips currently are inventorying all the faceting equipment for insurance purposes. This list will be passed on to the Board. A complete inventory of the entire clubhouse and its contents is now being compiled so that accurate data is available for insurance purposes.

**New Business**:
Max Washburn passed out samples of a feldspar material we are tentatively calling golden labradorite until further identification can be made. Mr. Washburn was anxious to see club members take samples and do their best to make items (faceted stones and cabochons) which he can use as demonstration pieces. Ultimately Mr. Washburn hopes to treat the material to make it a more golden or a red color and sell it in large quantities.

**Speaker**: David Harleston, President of Lathrops Jewelry
**Topic**: "Business Perspectives in Jewelry"
David Harleston began working at Lathrops as a teenager and never left. Over the years he has seen the market change drastically. The opening of the market to a world economy has created a free-for-all in the jewelry business. For individuals to survive against cheap labor and abundant product, a person must create something individual. A unique cut, stone setting, or design is the only way to set yourself or your business apart and to make a profit.

Treatments to stones also have evolved, but the discussion over what is a treated stone continues. It is often a sticking point to some buyers. Harleston believes there is no such thing as an "untreated" stone since any gem you see has been treated in some way. As he said, "no stone comes popping out of the ground perfectly cut, polished, or set."

As a rule with the newest techniques, with most stones it is virtually impossible to tell if or what kind of treatment has been applied. Sapphires and rubies are the exception.

Tanzanite, an increasingly popular stone, is a murky and opaque green in its natural state. Once heated, the stone becomes transparent and the color emerges.

Globally, new stones are emerging daily for jewelry purposes. But abundance and availability of material are nothing without being able to produce the finished product quickly. Harleston said he had seen many an excellent cutter with terrific products fail to compete because he or she was too slow in creating the finished item.

A recent development in speed has come to the forefront with freshwater pearls. Freshwater pearls are now being raised in China alongside agriculture. Freshwater pearls can create many more pearls in a small space than can their saltwater cousins. For this reason, freshwater pearls are less expensive and easier to come by. Freshwater pearls take readily to dye and keep their color better. Even their sole drawback, shape, is being overcome. New freshwater pearls are almost perfectly round, and to all appearances, are a duplicate of the saltwater variety.

Science and a rapidly changing marketplace have turned the jewelry business around. Because of this, Harleston stated that any new purchase must be made to suit your individual tastes. Do not buy a jewelry item only as an investment. Buy what you really like personally. Within a few short years, what you thought would be an investment can fall out of favor and lose its value. Buy within your comfort level. “If I’m showing you a donut but all you see is the hole in the middle, then don’t buy it,” Harelston said. And in conclusion he added, “There are too many available choices for you to be stuck with any stone, cut, setting, or entire jewelry collection.” The meeting ended at 9:20 p.m.

## Mineral Section

*by Steve Blyskal, Chairperson & Dean Lagerwall, Assistant Chairperson*

Mineral Section meetings occur on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month from September (3rd Wednesday only) through June (1st Wednesday only).

Upcoming Meeting Topics

**May 3**: **AUCTION**: Specimens from HGMS members will be auctioned with a portion of the proceeds going to the Mineral Section. This is the same auction format practiced the past few years. Please read the accompanying announcement for further details. Refreshments will be provided.

**May 17**: **Native Copper**: Come learn about the variety and uses of this mineral. Bring in some pieces from your own collection and let us drool. Dean Lagerwall will host the meeting. Refreshments will be provided.

**June 7**: **Macro and Micro Photography**: For the last meeting before our summer hiatus, Sam Norwood will present various techniques for macro and micro photography. The discussion will include techniques for taking close-up photographs—close-up lenses, telephoto lenses, macro lenses, reversing normal lenses, bellows, extension tubes, microscope systems, and CCD cameras. Processing of photographs will also be

covered: cropping, clean-up, and merging photos with Helicon Focus to increase depth of field. This meeting was rescheduled from March 15 due to a work conflict. Refreshments will be provided.

**We will meet again September 6** in preparation for the September HGMS show.

If you have any topics or ideas you wish to have presented or would be willing to present at our Mineral Section meetings, please contact Dean at dean_lagerwall@yahoo.com or (979) 480-9373.

## Paleontology Section Report

*by Rick Rexroad, Chairman*

March's Paleontology Section activities included collecting at three Brownwood localities and two outings to Houston Museum of Natural Science (HMNS). On Tuesday, March 21, several members attended a lecture and IMAX presentation by Dr. Paul Soreno (University of Chicago), one of the leading young academic paleontologists in the country. Dr. Soreno showed photos of fossil material and a reconstruction of "Super Croc," a prehistoric crocodile that was over 30 feet long, along with photos and tales of his adventures in Saharan Africa.

On March 25, HMNS hosted HGMS members on a tour of their current special exhibit from the American Museum of Natural History, entitled "Dinosaurs: Ancient Fossils, New Discoveries." As the name suggests, the exhibit focuses on new theories and discoveries about dinosaurs and the environments in which they lived. Perhaps the most striking fossils were the amazing feathered dinosaurs from Liaoning, China, many of which were reconstructed in a dino diorama that recreated the lush, lake-side ecosystem in which these bird-like dinosaurs flourished. One such bird-like dinosaur genus present at Liaoning is called Sinornithosaurus (i.e., Chinese bird lizard, if my Latin translation is correct). Another feathered dinosaur, the late Cretaceous Bambiraptor (I just love that name) was discovered by a 14-year-old boy in Montana. Although only about 12 inches tall, the large claw on Bambiraptor's second toe suggests that this dinosaur was a predator, killing smaller prey including mammals and reptiles.

Also included in the exhibit were biomechanical reproductions of the neck movement of an Apatosaurus (formerly known as Brontosaurus) and the gait of a Tyrannosaurus rex (sorry Mr. Spielberg, but there's no way that a 15,000-pound Cretaceous-aged T. rex could outrun a jeep at Jurassic Park unless the jeep was stuck in first gear and couldn't reach a speed of 10 mph). Other interesting new theories and computer simulations suggest that some sauropods may have been able to swing their tales to make a snapping sound like a bullwhip, as a form of warning or even in display for attracting females!

Another exhibit featured a reconstructed section of a track-site from the Davenport Ranch in central Texas. It showed the crisscrossing footprints of four genera of sauropods and one theropod. Examination of these and other track patterns from the same site suggests that small and full-grown dinosaurs of the same species may have traveled together as family units.

In addition to the documented late Cretaceous comet impact, the exhibit also points to other factors that may have contributed over a longer timeframe to the extinction of the dinosaurs, including world-wide climatic changes related to sea-level changes and intense volcanic activity (the Deccan Traps of India) that resulted in global greenhouse warming and the production of acid rain.

The HMNS special exhibit "Dinosaurs: Ancient Fossils, New Discoveries" runs through July 10, 2006. This is one that you do not want to miss!

**Upcoming Paleontology Section events** at our standard third Tuesday of the month HGMS Clubhouse meetings include:

**April 18**: A presentation by Dr. Neal Immega regarding new photographic techniques that provide better focus throughout the entire depth-of-field for small-scale photos (macro photography)

**May 16**: A presentation by Dr. Tom Yancey of Texas A&M

**June 20**: A presentation by Dr. Scott Clark pertaining to the recent discovery of a mammoth fossil during excavation for a municipal water line west of Brownwood, Texas

Everyone is invited to attend these interesting and informative lectures.

## General Meeting Program Summary

*March 28, 2006*
*by Matt Dillon*
*HGMS 1st Vice President*

Our program for the March 28, 2006 General Meeting was presented by our own Neal Immega. He went through his actual fourth grade rock cycle presentation, and HGMS members played the parts of the fourth graders. He displayed and discussed all the materials he has prepared for giving presentations at schools whenever an opportunity arises. He keeps a suitcase prepared with all the necessities for giving the talk, and it is ready to go on a moment's notice. Neal encouraged all members to get involved in the rewarding effort to take our message to the school children. His presentation was well received.

## In Our Library

*by Art Smith, Librarian*

I once again have the library cluttered with auction items. Sorry—I hope to have those things out and in the next sale plus get the duplicate books stored up in the loft. We made $165 dollars from our book sale, and that will help with the binding I am trying to get caught up on.

I did a comprehensive evaluation of the library's contents—mostly books and bound journals—and came up with a value of approximately $120,000.00. This was at the request of our president. Actually it was requested about five or six years ago, but until I had the index completed, it would have been an even greater time-consuming

task. The index does have a field for value with each entry. For books you can know the value, but that does not work for journal or magazine article entries.

I will explain why I say *approximately* for the total value. It is because I have found quite a bit of duplication of values in our index. I have removed or corrected much of it, but I should do a couple of other checks to possibly catch more duplication. Such checks are very time consuming, so I will go with what we have for now. There are several reasons for duplication, but the main one is that some books have more than one entry in the index as they cover several subjects or areas that we want indexed. This is fine as long as there is more than one value for each book which would give us an incorrect total. I removed about 600, but there may be more. I will stick with the data we have for the present.

New books have been donated by Fred Brueckner. One is an illustrated history of goldsmithing from Egyptian times to present. The other is a Smithsonian book on gems, minerals, rocks, and fossils. Thank you, Fred. They should be on the shelf by the time you read this.

Quite a few books have been added from those given us by Al and Marion Kidwell. Our open shelf space is becoming more scarce, but we can still manage by doing some shifting.

There is a new magazine that is to be published called, *Wire Jewelry.* I have signed up for an introductory subscription and will ask opinions on the issues we get and see if we should continue subscribing. No issues have arrived yet.

Now is the time to do your research for your summer vacation. If you wait until just before you leave, it will be too late to do a good job of finding the best spots.

## HGMS General Meeting

*March 28, 2006*
*by Margaret Hardman-Muye*
*HGMS Secretary*

**Guests**: John Cooper, Gene Rooney, and Paul Brandais.

**Announcements:** Scott Singleton is continuing to write a history of the club and showed some photos of past members. Karen Burns will get information about the museum together and send it to Phyllis George for inclusion on the Web site.

**Education Committee**: Dave Hawkins reported that a fabrication class will start next week. There will be an enameling class in June. Register early, as it will fill fast.

**Daylight Section:** Maryann Mitscherling says the agate burnishers are finished. They will put wooden handles on them.

**Faceting:** Phyllis George stated that Rusty Bennett is the new Chair. They had a discussion of faceting designs, and the program was on available documentation on designs.

**Lapidary:** In April, the program will be on **amber**.

**Mineral**: Dean Lagerwall says April programs will be on geodes and on "minerals of the silver trails." An auction will be held at the first meeting in May, and the program at the second May meeting will be on metallic copper. In June the program is on Macro and Micro Photography.

**Youth:** The youth are working in the shop, averaging 12 members at each meeting.

**Show:** Sigrid Stewart and her committee handed out materials about the show at the Clear Lake Show and will do the same at the upcoming Intergem Show.

**Field Trips:** April 22 there will be a trip to the Alcoa/Rockdale lignite mine.

**Clubhouse/Shop:** Matt Phillips is building an air exchanger to remove suspended oil from the shop air (caused by saw use). Look for it soon.

**Membership**: Dues are due! You will not receive the BBG any longer until you pay.

**Newsletter:** Please get submissions to Phyllis George by **Wednesday before the second weekend** of each month.

**Web site:** Let Phyllis know if there are any problems.

**Library:** The auction is complete. Next month there will be more minerals and some lapidary material.

**Show and Tell:** Sunday Bennett showed yellow petrified wood she collected from the Tessman Ranch field trip.

**Door Prize:** David Hawkins won a great reproduction of an old Roman coin cast in silver by Tom Wright.

HGMS Board Meeting Minutes

## HGMS Board Minutes

*April 4, 2006*
*by Margaret Hardman-Muye*
*HGMS Secretary*

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| X | President | Scott Singleton | | Faceting Rep. | Phyllis George |
| | 1st Vice President | Matt Dillon | X | Lapidary Rep. | Dave Hawkins |
| X | 2nd Vice President | Beverly Mace | X | Mineral Rep. | Art Smith |
| X | Treasurer | Paul McGarry | | Paleontology Rep. | Terry Brawner |
| X | Treasurer Assistant | Lowell Stouder | X | Day Lighters Rep. | Sunday Bennett |
| X | Secretary | Margaret Hardman-Muye | | Past President | Norm Lenz |

**Call to order, 7:31,** by Scott Singleton

**Approval of March Minutes**

- Done via e-mail
- The Secretary was given a number of items to file: An acceptance of material we donated to Katy Knight, a Glasell photo student; an approval letter from the man-

agement agency for us to paint the HGMS sign; and letters regarding the 501(c)3.

**Treasurer's Report: (Paul McGarry)**

- February and March financial statements are not available yet.
- Changes to the signatory card on the bank account are completed
- The investigation of checks that haven't cleared the bank is also complete.
- The Ohio Casualty Insurance bill is paid. The letter for the company will be filed in the official records.

**Committee and Section Reports:**

- **No Section Reports were given.** Section representatives were asked to take back the information about the April 22 field trip to the Alcoa/Rockdale Lignite mines. For more information, call Sigrid Stewart or Scott Singleton.
- **Show:** Sigrid reported that the Publicity Committee met. They are developing a list of newspapers where we will advertise. Show cards, pads, etc., have been printed and are available at the shop. Most of the special exhibits are confirmed. The Thompson brothers will do gem ID for HGMS at the show. The Show field trip is April 22 to the Alcoa/Rockdale lignite mine near Elgin, TX.
- **Shop and Clubhouse**: Dave Hawkins reported that the electrician wants $575.00 to put three lights in the garage area. Two lights for the loft were not included in this bid. After discussion it was decided that we will get several more bids to include all of these lights.

**Old and New Business:**

1 Matt Phillips has been taking photos of each room for a **photo inventory** of club possessions. These photos are on CD, and a copy is also on the computer in the office. A copy of the CD will be given to each Section. Each Section will make a list of items in their room, cabinets etc. They are to give an estimated replacement value for each piece of equipment. Photos will then be taken of each item to go with the list. Sections: please check in your cabinets and give values for those items, too!

2 **501(c)3** Terry Proctor has sent copies of the letters from the Comptroller regarding the 501(c)3. He has been given the EIN # by Lowell Stouder. Copies of the letters are filed with the official cub records.

3 **Bylaw changes** The Board did not have any objections to the bylaw changes recommended by Scott for selection of Show Chairman and Asst. Show Chairman. The Education Committee will be included in Section 3. David Hawkins (Education Chair) is to send a definition of the Education Subcommittee to be included in Section 4. Discussion will continue in May.

4 Approval has been received to **repaint the HGMS sign** in front. The letter will be filed with correspondence. Scott will ask Tom Wright to get the paint. Scott will paint the sign.

5 **HGMS banner replacement:** Scott was able to find photos of the old banner artwork, and brought mock up examples to show us. The Board approved getting two banners made for $600.00–$700.00.

6 Matt Phillips brought his completed proposal for the **air filtration system** for the shop. Neal Immega approved the plan, and the parts have been purchased. The system will be put together in the next several weeks. It will be located under the

back saw tables. The filter is washable in warm soapy water, but should need cleaning only rarely.

7 **Renovation of men's bathroom**. Tom Wright has called the man whose bid was accepted. Construction should begin soon.

8 **Fantastic Carpet Services update**. There is an issue regarding the buffer. Tom will do nothing until he can assess whether it can be fixed.

9 **Monthly cleaning service**. After discussion, it was decided that the Sections will not be able to clean the clubhouse consistently. We would like to hire someone, and part of that job would be to make a list of supplies such as toilet paper and paper towels that are needed. For now, Beverly Mace and Art Smith will develop an inventory list for clubhouse supplies and post it. Various members agreed to buy needed items and turn in receipts.

10 **The wall in the garage**, outside the classroom, has never been painted. Scott will ask Tom to buy a gallon of white paint, and Scott will paint that wall.

11 **Update on Harrison County G&MS donation**. Phyllis received a thank you letter for our donation, and after it was read, it was posted on the bulletin board in the kitchen.

12 **Genie machine in shop.** It was decided to give the Genie to the Lapidary Section and let them decide if they want to repair it and how they want to use it. It needs a new motor. Scott will let Neal know.

13 A **Scholarship** request was received from the child of a club member. There was discussion about whether we want to give scholarships to individuals. Discussion will continue, as there are no screening tools in place. We decided to ask this requestor to send us a letter with grade point, plans after degree is earned etc.

14 **HGMS brochure print request.** Karen Burns has requested a supply of 1000 HGMS Brochures for distribution throughout the year at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. It was suggested that this should be included as a separate budget item. Beverly agreed to get prices for printing.

15 **Budget:** The Secretary was asked to send a copy of the year end statement and a copy of last year's budget to all Board members so we can develop this year's budget.

16 **Original Deed to clubhouse.** We don't appear to have a copy. Secretary will ask Phyllis George to post a notice in the BBG. It was suggested that Tom Wright or Gary Anderson might know where it is. Scott will check with them.

17 Getting an offsite **Safe Deposit Box** was discussed.

Respectfully submitted, Margaret Hardman-Muye, Board Secretary

## Tips & Hints

*Rouge for Anyone—Black, green, red, white, and yellow*
*from Homer's Corner, via Paradise Gem 11/2005 and Breccia 6/2006*

**Polishing Compounds**:

- Black Rouge is for gold, silver, and German silver. Gives a high polish.
- Green Rouge is for platinum, chrome, stainless steel, and hard materials.
- Red Rouge is for gold, silver, and soft metals and materials.

- White Rouge is for the harder metals: platinum, chrome, stainless and some of the harder material.
- Yellow Rouge is for roughing in as it cuts faster. It usually has a base of beeswax to hold the polish in. It is for hard materials such as chrome and stainless steel.

## Buff Polishing Compound Combinations

*by Ralph and Audrey Belair of the Spokane Rock Rollers*
*from The Northwest Newsletter 8/1992, via Nickel Basin Rockhound 6/2005, Chips and Chats 9/2005, and Breccia 3/2006*

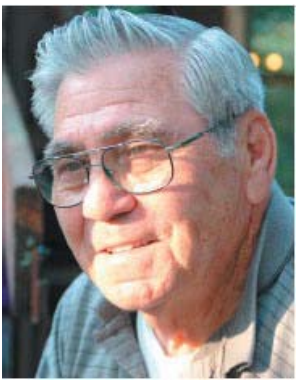
The following are combinations recommended by experienced gem cutters.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Calcite** | Muslin and Tin Oxide<br>Velvet and Tin Oxide |
| **Feldspar** | Felt and Creium Oxide |
| **Garnet** | Leather and Linde A<br>Leather and Chrome Oxide<br>Felt and Cerium Oxide |
| **Goldstone** | Felt and Cerium Oxide<br>Pellon and Cerium Oxide |
| **Howlite** | Felt and Tin Oxide<br>Leather and Linde A |
| **Jadeite** | Leather and Linde A<br>Leather and Chrome Oxide<br>Muslin and Tin Oxide<br>Velvet and Tin Oxide |
| **Jasper** | Felt and Cerium Oxide<br>Leather and Linde A |
| **Lapis Lazuli** | Leather and Linde A<br>Leather and Chrome Oxide |
| **Malachite** | Leather and Linde A<br>Leather and Chrome Oxide |
| **Nephrite** | Leather and Linde A<br>Leather and Chrome Oxide<br>Muslin and Tin Oxide<br>Wood and Tin Oxide<br>Velvet and Tin Oxide |
| **Opal** | Felt and Cerium Oxide<br>Velvet and Tin Oxide<br>Muslin and Tin Oxide |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Quartz** | Felt and Cerium Oxide |
| | Leather and Cerium Oxide |
| | Pellon and Cerium Oxide |
| | Felt and Tin Oxide |
| **Rhodocrosite** | Leather and Linde A |
| | Leather and Tin Oxide |
| | Leather and Diamond |
| **Serpentine** | Leather and Linde A |
| | Leather and Tin Oxide |
| **Sodalite** | Felt and Cerium Oxide |
| **Tiger Eye** | Leather and Linde A |
| | Pellon and Cerium Oxide |
| **Turquoise** | Leather and Linde A |
| | Leather and Tin Oxide |
| | Leather and Zam |
| **Unakite** | Felt and Cerium Oxide |
| **Variscite** | Leather and Linde A |
| | Leather and Tin Oxide |

## AFMS President's Messsage

*Jim's Thoughts*
*by Jim Robinson*
*from AFMS Newsletter 4/2006*



Finally it's spring time for most of us. Time to get out the digging tools and get ready for some field time. It has been a pretty rough winter for many, but for us here in north Florida we have had our usual winter—upper 60s to middle 70s all week and near freezing on weekends.

In my last message I expressed concern that newsletter information may not be getting to the general membership,. Judging from the bulletins I received this past month, this is not the case at all. More than 50% ran one or more committee reports, and many ran all of them including my message. This is encouraging indeed as the club bulletins are our only means of keeping up with what's happening throughout the Federations. We would encourage anyone with a concern or suggestion on the day-to-day operation of the AFMS to contact one of the officers or myself.

The AFMS Annual Meeting is less then six months away, not too far in the future to be making plans to attend, and some of our committee people will be looking for help. If you are asked, be generous. Remember, it's your Federation.

Joy Bourne is well underway with the AFMS Endowment Fund Drive and is in need of items for the raffle. Many of our programs are funded from proceeds from the Endowment Fund and would not be available without it. As an example, just look at the slide and video programs your own Federation receives each year. Many of you use these contributions each month at your meetings for programs.

During the past three years, the AFMS Judges Seminar has made many members of the Regional Federations aware of the magnificent Wildacres Retreat in Little Switzerland, NC and of the mineral, lapidary, and jewelry classes offered each year by the Eastern and Southeast Federations. I had the pleasure of attending the judging seminar in 2005. I also have had the joy of teaching faceting there and at William Holland in Young Harris, GA. This year both Federations are offering these classes to members of other federations on a space available bases. If you have an opportunity to get in one of these classes, please don't pass it up. It's an experience you will remember for a lifetime. Until next month, Jim

## Some Thoughts on Showmanship & Competition

*by Dr. Robert Carlson, AFMS President-elect*
*from the AFMS Newsletter 04/2006*

Think about competition for your show. It has been my observation that when a show includes competitive exhibits, the quality of all the exhibits improves. They reach another level of showmanship.

Is showmanship important? You bet. I remember attending a show put on by a club that was vehemently opposed to competition. It was a fairly large club, and they had a lot of cabochon displays. Most of these—case after case, row upon row—were displayed in flat cases where you had to bend over the case to see what was being displayed. There were no case lights, but that was a good thing. Some of the case liners were filthy, and a few almost fit. The cabochons were packed together so that one could barely distinguish one from another. The labels were nearly nonexistent, so you had to know what you were looking at to determine what material was being displayed. Imagine that you are a member of the general public and want to learn more about the rockhounding hobby. Would the just-described displays help or encourage you in any way?

When you see a show with competitive exhibits, you will see displays of cabochons that are well lit so you can see the beauty of the material and the quality of the polish. Because the cabochons are labeled—with labels that do not overpower the display—you can determine what materials are being shown. The liners will be clean, fit well, and will complement the material being displayed. There will be a focus within the

cases of one or two items that draw the attention of those who pass by. The items in the display will be neatly arranged and separated from one another so that once the case has the attention of the passerby, the viewer can examine the rest of the items in the case at leisure.

The displays just described will thrill and educate the public. It is professional showmanship at its best. So why have competition?

Displays placed in competition will have at least two independent individuals reviewing and critiquing the displays and offering suggestions for improvement. This is especially important to a person just starting to display his or her material. When a display draws a lot of attention from the public, not only the material but the showmanship is very good. Remember that the general public does not necessarily know about the hobby or the material being shown. It is the showmanship that gains their attention, stopping them in front of the case. They learn about the materials being displayed from that point onward.

## Having Fun—Junior Activities

*Capturing Our Hobby with Art*
*by Jim Brace-Thompson, AFMS Junior Activities Chair*
*from the AFMS Newsletter 3/2006*

Kids are natural-born artists who take to Crayola crayons like ducklings to water. In addition to being just plain fun to create, artwork can help develop a child's creative brain and hand-eye coordination, and in the adult world is an important part of earth science and lapidary work. Figures and photos are helpful in illustrating field trip reports, in adding educational value to a display, or in providing blueprints to guide a person through a lapidary project. Developing a child's artistic talents can also lead to a full-time career, as with mineral artists Noel DeDora, Lyn Sylvia Kilian, Saul Krotki, Gabriele Berndt, or professional mineral photographer Jeff Scovil. The following are ideas for activities to help kids incorporate art into our hobby.

**Activity 1**:
**Draw Minerals and Fossils**: Lead kids in a group exercise drawing diagrams of their favorite minerals and fossils or in drawing the different types of crystal structures. This can be done with kids at all levels, and for the youngest kids, Diamond Dan Productions has really nifty mineral coloring books for sale at bargain prices (for more info, contact Darryl Powell, diamonddan@rochester.rr.com).

**Activity 2**:
**Reconstruct Past Life in Art**: Ask kids to bring fossils from their collections or have the youth leader bring different fossils from one fossil locality. Then ask kids to imagine what their favorite trilobite, for example, looked like when it was alive. This can lead into individual or group activities drawing murals or dioramas of ancient life and reconstructions of ancient environments. Kids might draw their own pictures on sheets of paper, or you might get a large roll of paper to create a group diorama. You might also make casts by pressing real fossils into clay to make a mold and then pouring in

plaster. When it hardens, have kids paint the casts the colors and patterns they think the animal may have had when it was alive. For instance, do they think a trilobite might have been all black or brown, or might they have had spots or stripes of different colors? Similarly, did brachiopods have stripes or swirls like many modern clams? Have kids look through picture books of modern sea life before deciding on patterns and colors for painting their fossil casts.

**Activity 3**:
**Field Art**: Memory is a fickle friend. Thus it's always useful to sketch an area or outcrop where you collected minerals or fossils to show the association of rock types, significant landmarks, specific horizons where fossils or minerals were collected, etc. Such a sketch serves as a handy reminder the next time you visit the locality or as a useful reference tool for others who may wish to visit it. Teach this skill to your club's kids!

**Activity 4**:
**Maps**: It is important to document self-collected material and to supplement labels for individual specimens with maps of where you found your material. Maps are an art form unto themselves. At the simplest level, they consist of lines, arrows, and text to indicate names of roads, distance markers, etc. But they can also be illustrated to provide visual supplements showing significant landmarks illustrating what's to be found and where, or showing schematics of the layers of rock at a deposit and which layers hold significant minerals or fossils.

**Activity 5**:
**Lapidary Blueprints**: Teach kids to sketch the steps of a lapidary project before they jump in. It's usually easier to do a project if you can "see" the steps in advance and have visual reminders at hand to guide you rather than a dense set of written instructions alone. With a lapidary project, pictures are indeed worth a thousand words.

**Activity 6**:
**Photography**: Not everyone has artistic talent. That's why God created cameras! Even those of us who can't draw a stick figure have a way to capture our finds and lapidary work in visual form. Photos can be used in many ways. Most magazines insist that articles submitted for publication be illustrated. Photos breathe life into field trip reports and write ups on how to construct a lapidary project. They also enliven a rock display with shots of sites where rocks were collected. And slides can illustrate talks. Digital cameras and computers have opened a range of neat possibilities. For instance, you can illustrate a field trip report with photos of a locality and shots of individual specimens collected. This can be printed in hardcopy form or posted to an individual or club Web site to share with plugged-in rockhounds from around the world. Can't identify a fossil or mineral you've collected? Shoot it with your digital camera and post it online to see if anyone else might identify it. I've also seen inexpensive club calendars produced using electronic photos with a Mineral- or Locality-of-the-Month and dates highlighted for club meetings and other club events. And kids can have fun using digital cameras to make rockhound trading cards with pictures of minerals and fossils and facts about each. If your kids are like mine, they'll be teaching you new

and creative ways to create art with a digital camera!

With activities like these, let's help develop the budding artist residing within each child and show them how to put their inherent artistic inclinations to good work while—as always—having fun.

## Zeitner Receives Prestigious Carnegie Mineralogical Award

*by Steve & Carolyn Weinberger*
*from The AFMS Newsletter 4/2006*

When you say the phrase "been there, done that" you could be talking about June Culp Zeitner, first lady of American rockhounding!

A beaming June Zeitner receives the Carnegie Mineralogical Award from Director Billie De Walt.
Photo: Steve Weinberger

June, who just turned 90 on February 7, has traveled the country collecting rocks and minerals and writing about the localities and people she's visited. Her articles in *Lapidary Journal* and *Rock & Gem* magazines have been read by thousands and helped spur interest in collecting minerals, cutting materials, and fossils, and in making gems and jewelry. For many, her articles in the magazines or her series of "Gem Trail" books were the first introduction to what would become a lifelong interest.

June, one of five children, was born in Michigan. Her father, a very progressive man for his day, insisted that his five daughters attend college. June's first job was teaching on an Indian Reservation in South Dakota where she met and subsequently married Albert Zeitner. It was Albert's interest in rocks, minerals, and fossils that infected June with the rockhound bug. Together they traveled and collected throughout the United States. These treks, carefully documented by June, became the early basis for her Gem Trails books. She's still writing—now working on a new book on geodes and still contributing to *Rock & Gem* magazine.

June remains active in her local South Dakota gem and mineral club, planning and putting in a display each year for the annual show. She's donated large parts of her collections to various museums in South Dakota as well. She was also very active in the Midwest Federation, serving in various offices including President, and she's judged Midwest and AFMS entries in the various bulletin contests. In 2003 June was awarded the very first AFMS Recognition Award for her contributions to the Federations.

Citing the need to recognize excellence in the earth sciences, June established the National Lapidary & Mineral Hall of Fame in 1987. Now housed in Murdo, SD, the hall of fame also contains a large portion of June's personal collection as well as items donated by several of the over 120 inductees (www.rockhoundhalloffame.org). June

became a member of the hall in 1992, inducted for her contributions in the field of education.

Each year the Carnegie Mineral Museum (Pittsburgh, PA) recognizes an individual or organization for their outstanding contributions to the field. The award is made possible by the Hillman Foundation. Past recipients of the award include Bob Jones, (Sr. Editor of *Rock & Gem* magazine), John Sinkankas, Paul Desautels (former Curator of the Smithsonian Gem & Mineral collection), Fred Pough, Bryan Lees, Wendell Wilson (*Mineralogical Record*), Marie Huizing (*Rocks & Minerals Magazine*) and the Sterling Hill Mining Museum (Franklin, NJ).

For 2005, the Carnegie Mineralogical Award was presented to June Culp Zeitner—and she flew to Tucson to accept the prize in person! We had a terrific visit with this fine lady whom we consider one of our special friends.

We can't think of a more fitting recipient than June—she's "been there and done that" for our hobby.

## Summer "Camps" Await

*from the AFMS Newsletter 3/2006*
*Author not identified*

Four of our Regional Federations sponsor workshops for their members. Although priority is given to members of clubs within the regional federation sponsoring the workshop, members of clubs outside the area are usually accepted on a "space available" basis. Here is some information on the workshops for 2006. We encourage you to take advantage of one or more of these unique educational and fun experiences this year.

The Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies (SFMS) will offer five weeklong workshops during 2006 at the William Holland School of Lapidary Arts in Georgia and at the Wildacres Retreat in North Carolina. The following schedule has been announced:

Session 1, Wildacres ..... April 13-20, 2006
Session 2, William Holland ..... June 11-17, 2006
Session 3, Wildacres ..... Aug. 21-27, 2006
Session 4, Wildacres ..... Sep. 18-24, 2006
Session 5, William Holland ..... Oct. 8-14, 2006

The total number of available bedrooms has been expanded significantly during the past season, and the Southeast Federation is pleased to invite members of other Federations to attend the workshops. Southeast Federation registration will start on January 17, 2006, and members of other federations may submit registration forms on or after March 17th. The postmark date determines priority in classes with limited enrollment. Of course, out-of-federation AFMS members who are also SFMS club members may register in January.

The SFMS Workshops offer a wide variety of classes in both lapidary and jewelry-

making crafts. In general, students will spend four and a half days in class with an optional half-day off in midweek. Registration is the afternoon before classes start, and departure is after breakfast on the day following the last class. Workshops are open from 9 to 5 each day with a break for lunch. Evenings and the free afternoon are devoted to extracurricular activities that may include guest speakers, demonstrations, field trips, and an auction. The week concludes with show-and-tell. Anyone may tail gate when classes are not in session during the last half of the week.

Lodge accommodations including meals are $310 per person, double occupancy. A limited number of single rooms are available for $470. There will be lab fees and charges for supplies and materials. The expected cost is published in class descriptions in the Lodestar, the monthly newsletter of the SFMS. Electronic copies of the Lodestar, as well as detailed workshop and course descriptions, are available on the Internet at the following URL: <www.amfed.org/sfms>. A special supplement to the Lodestar is published in the November issue with all of the workshop details for the following year.

The California Federation offers three weeks of workshops at **Camp Paradise** and **Zzyzx**. Both facilities offer rustic sleeping facilities, but attendees may bring their RVs if they prefer. All meals are included plus a variety of hands-on classes and field trips. The dates for 2006 are:

**Zzyzx**: ..... March 19–26
**Camp Paradise**: ..... September 3–9, September 10: 16

Cost for the workshops is approximately $250 per person plus materials fees for classes. For more information, visit the CFMS Web site www.cfmsinc.org.

The Northwest Federation began its workshop endeavor in 2005 at OMSI, Camp Hancock, which is located in the John Day Fossil Bed area or Oregon. Although dates, cost, and details for 2006 have not yet been announced, you can obtain information from NFMS President Frank Posthuma. See the Northwest Federation Web site for details www.amfed.org/nfms.

The Eastern Federation sponsors two week-long workshops at the Wildacres Workshop facility in Little Switzerland, NC (near Asheville). The facility is first class with modern rooms, all with private bath, well equipped classroom/labs, and a beautiful, restful private campus.

Each week features an “expert-in-residence” who presents illustrated talks on his or her specialty, a variety of hands-on classes, plus lots of other activities including tailgating, an auction, and a fun night evening. Dates for 2006 are:

May 22–28
September 11–17

Tuition for the week is $320 per person which includes room and board. There is a modest fee for materials that varies with classes chosen.

The EFMLS Workshops at Wildacres have been selected for the AFMS Judges Seminar, the fourth session of which will be held this May.

For information on the EFMLS Workshops at Wildacres including classes being offered and an application form, visit the EFMLS Web site: www.amfed.org/efmls.

## AFMS Safety Message

*Be Safe, Be Well*
*by Don Monroe, AFMS Safety Chair*
*from AFMS Newsletter 3/2006*

### Simple Tools

When I talk about simple tools, I am not referring to the term teenagers may use to describe their acquaintances that are among the less brilliant. I am talking about tools that most of us use at one time or another. The tools that first come to mind are wedges, chisels, and punches made of steel. Because we do use these tools so often, we tend to ignore any hazards associated with their use. Let's talk about that a minute.

Get out the punch, steel wedge, or cold chisel that you use the most and take a good look at it. First area of concern should be the "cutting" edge of the tool. Is it sharp and well formed to accomplish the intended task? Often the results obtained can be improved by polishing this working area using fine sandpaper or even a buffing wheel. Next, look at the part of the tool that you strike with a hammer. This is where many hazards occur. If there is any evidence of "mushrooming," cracking, or other damage, you must correct this condition. A small piece of metal may be dislodged from the tool and can become a missile that penetrates the hand holding the tool, or bounces back and strikes the user in the eye, or injures bystanders. For this and other reasons we **MUST ALWAYS WEAR SOME TYPE OF EYE PROTECTION**. Even a wood chisel can create chips that can irritate the eye.

Many of our simple tools are handmade and may require more maintenance than a commercial tool. I imagine that many if not most of us have made a chisel, punch, or stamp for a particular application. Metal selection is the first problem we face. I usually will go through my scrap bin and find a piece of tool steel such as an old file to make my masterpiece. This is perfectly acceptable if we remember that when we do not know what alloy we are using, we are guessing when we try to harden or heat treat the finished tool. You may want to consult *The Complete Metalsmith* by Tim McCreight or another text for guidance. If you really aren't comfortable with this process, or if the tool is really important to you, consider talking with your local blacksmith who will probably be willing to share a bit of his or her knowledge. If you are going to make a lot of tools, it could be worth the investment to buy some tool steel. Usually the vendor will furnish information from the steel manufacturer detailing how to harden and heat treat the product.

We should not ignore simple tools made of other materials. There are a variety of nonferrous materials such as brass, bronze, aluminum, pewter, and even lead that are often employed. If you do chasing or repoussé, you probably use some of the aforementioned materials in addition to wood. We do not use wood to a great degree, and that is a pity. Rock maple and dogwood make great tools including hammers (mallets), wood planes, and punches. Chasing silver and copper offer many opportunities to

make dogwood punches that will show you that some of the "old ways" were excellent. The beauty of dogwood is that it can be used either green or dried with similar results.

If nothing else, I hope that I have provoked some thought about simple tools and have encouraged some of you to try different ways of crafting.

## SCFMS President's Message

*"Words from William"*
*by William Medford*
*from SCFMS Newsletter 3-4/2006*

It is now the spring show season for many of the Federation clubs. With these shows, our clubs are able to make this once a year contact with the general public. There are people who have attended gem and mineral shows for years and are not aware that the show is produced by their local gem and mineral society. This is just one of the reasons that each society needs to have some sort of shirt, vest, or jacket for the members to wear while conducting the show. No one notices a small badge or tag—it takes something big and bold to catch their attention. Also there cannot be too many signs, banners, and pendants at the show with the club logo on them.

Does your club work with the local newspaper, getting them to write a show article with pictures to be run **after** the show? Yes, I did say **after** the show. In most instances, the article will be larger and have several pictures. Usually any prior publicity about the show in the newspaper can be obtained only by paying for an announcement, and such ads are usually expensive. The after-the-show articles are human interest, and there is no cost to the club. It has worked for many years for numerous clubs, and it will work for your club.

Several clubs in this Federation have very active programs with the schools and the scouts. They see this as a way to start an interest in earth sciences at an early age. I know that many, many of our clubs have junior members; in fact, I recently attended a meeting where junior members made presentations to the senior membership. To be honest, I had almost forgotten what it was like to hear young people tell how they collect and identify specimens. I ask that you review your junior program and determine if there is more that you can provide to these young people, whether they are junior members of your club or students in the local schools.

There have been inquiries from several clubs about the need to continue their Federation insurance. These inquires are for a multitude of reasons including no longer hosting a show and not participating in field trips. We continue to say that this is the cheapest insurance that your club can obtain. It is not possible to get this type of insurance when you need it and then drop it when you don't think you need it anymore. It takes only one claim against your club to wipe out the club and cause financial ruin to many of its members. Most cities will not let you rent any of their public facilities without insurance in amounts up to one million dollars. Our insurance plan is still the best deal around, so don't let your club be without it.

When was the last time that your club or a member of your club submitted an article for publication in the Federation newsletter? Has it really been that long, or is it that no one can remember? We would like to hear from you and publish your article so that all our clubs can enjoy the information that is contained in your article. Many of you write articles for your club newsletter but never take the time to write an article for the Federation. Don't you think it is time that we heard from you with an article for publication in the Federation newsletter?

*History of the HGMS Annual Show continued from page 19*

done, and planning began in the summer for the 1957 Flower Show with a Mr. Fischer presiding.

In addition to these two events in 1956, the club continued its usual practice of sending at least one delegate and case (usually more) to the State Federation show. In November, the club participated for the second time in the Men's Garden Club Show in the Garden Center.

**Houston, we have a show**: 1957 marked an historic watershed event for the club: Its first show was held on April 6 and 7 at the Garden Center. This followed their annual participation in the Flower and Garden Show in March (organized by Mr. Fischer). There is no indication of any financial outlay or income from the Flower and Garden Show.

The chairman of our first-ever show was not specified, most likely due to the lack of good minutes from 1957. Nonetheless, the sales booth was headed by Eleanor Smith, Bill Vietti, and Ken Fry, all of whom were experienced hands by this time (each helped run the Federation Show in 1953). They requested donations from members of such items as slabs, cabochons, and baroques. There were no dealers at the show, and the exhibit committee reminded people that they were permitted to show any material within their personal collections, regardless of whether it was "new work" or not. The show earned $535 in income, which is pretty remarkable from only a sales table. Their net profit for the show was $145. This net profit was offset by the construction in March of another 10 club cases for $206.

The other watershed event in 1957 was our incorporation as a nonprofit society (probably as a 501(c)(6), meaning donations were not tax-deductible. Incorporation as a 501(c)(3) would take another couple of decades).

In February, 1958, there were ongoing discussions regarding the two upcoming shows in the spring—a "Hobby Show" being held at the Shamrock Hotel at the end of March (Mrs. Brydon chairman) in which the club was invited to participate, and the "local" show (meaning the club's show) to be held April 12–13 (Mr. Fischer chairman, Mrs. Eleanor Smith sales, Mrs. Mulvey publicity). These shows were successfully carried out by the busy young club. In April it was announced that the club had won 1st place at the Hobby Show for the most professional exhibit. There were apparently no financial transactions at that show.

At our "local" show (Garden Center), there was a faceting machine and a trim saw

operated as demos in addition to a substantial number of cases which were being lined by Mr. Vietti. The minutes are rather skimpy, so no details are known about the show. The sales booth generated $295 in sales, a significant drop from the previous year, and this income was offset by $290 in expenses.

1959 began with serious discussion about a show. The date was chosen to be April 10–12 at the Garden Center after Mr. Fischer was able to secure this date. Mr. Dick Potter was show chairman, Mrs. Carey was sales chairman. Mrs. Carey and committee came up with the idea of putting labeled mineral specimens in boxes and selling them. Club volunteers were elicited to help with this project (although it should be noted that a substantial number of specimens were purchased specifically for this purpose). From brief references in the minutes, it appeared to be a struggle to get everything properly prepared for the show. From today's perspective, we can surely understand considering they started planning in January for an April show.

At the April general meeting (following the show), it was reported that the show was an outstanding success. And indeed it was: An income of $741 was realized against $490 in expenses.

To cap off the year, the club exhibited at Weldon's Cafeteria in late October or early November.

**The Early 60s**: By 1960, the show and a regular, standing show committee were considered standard business necessities. All the committees that we are familiar with were present such as sales, publicity, property (including floor plans), hospitality, demonstration, florescent light, and mineral identification. There were also some we are not familiar with: Floormen Committee and Rock Garden Committee. Apparently a "floorman" is a person who circulates on the floor of the show performing any such task as necessary, such as answering questions from visitors, keeping order, and being ready to explain the use of equipment on display. However, often spare floormen ended up being stolen by the sales booth, since this was really the lifeblood of the club at this time.

The shows from 1960–1962 continued to contain no retail dealers. Exhibits and demonstrations were the main focus, with an increasing number of demonstrations being slotted. The club earned a profit from the sales booth which consisted of club member-donated items such as mineral specimens, slabs, cutting rough, and tumbled stones. Grab bags were also a big item as they sold cheaply and were good repositories for low-grade material. Hundreds of these were made for each show.

The main detraction at the time was not show related: They were having problems with the IRS in 1960 for their failure to properly file returns. A rewrite of the constitution and bylaws followed in order to be in compliance with nonprofit statutes. In 1961, the Texas Federation followed suit due to the same difficulties. 1961 president Richard Offeman dealt with the State of Texas regarding our tax-exempt status, as there were difficulties there also.

Also, in 1962 the club started meeting in the Garden Center. This was a positive move

because the club had been floating from one meeting place to another since they left the Downtown Library in 1955. The Garden Center finally represented a home for the young club, and one they kept for the remainder of the decade and well into the 1970s.

Following the 1960 show, the club voted to move the show to the fall. The 1961 show, in addition, was moved to the Downtown Recreation Center because the Garden Center was undergoing renovations and they couldn't book it far enough in advance to give the show committee a proper lead time for preparations. It was held September 15–17. Show Chairman Irene Offeman did her customary wonderful job preparing and organizing the show and thoroughly documenting these preparations as well as the results. Her show chairman handover document detailing what, when, and (at that time) with whom things were to happen was exquisitely detailed. It constitutes the first surviving version (that I've found) of the master show preparation and planning document that has been passed down through the decades.

The 1960 and 1961 shows both netted between $330–350, resulting in profit margins of 50–60%. Not bad for a sales booth.

The club started its library in 1962 and also voted to start judged competition for juniors at the fall show, including having monetary awards, ribbons, and trophies. When they started discussing preparations for the next show, they first had to select a show location from among three possible choices: The Downtown Recreation Center where they just had a show, the renovated and enlarged (but still rather small) Garden Center, or the Shamrock Hilton Hotel exhibition hall. The Recreation Center had lots of space (far more than the Garden Center) but it had restrictions placed on it because it was a city-owned facility (the club had to get a special dispensation from the city in 1961 to be able to sell material from a sales booth). The Garden Center received the most votes. Mrs. Byrd was the Show Chairperson.

The 1961 annual show had a net loss of $12. This was due to the combined effects of a drop in sales booth income of about $200 and an increase in expenses of about $200 over the previous year. Although there is no mention in the minutes of this having adverse repercussions, I think it would be a fair assumption that this was the case, considering the club had experienced three straight years of good net profits from the show. My guess is that it was starting to get more difficult to impose the "request" or expectation on the club's members that they donate, every year, enough material to make the show's sales booth successful.

In August 1962, the month before the show, a motion was brought before the general meeting to move the show to Bellaire so that the club could hold a dealer show. This motion was tabled and referred to the Board of Directors, who that very year, were given authority to decide major issues independently of the general meeting. In January 1963, the Board approved a dealer show and brought the issue before the general meeting, where it was approved. In March, they selected the Shamrock Hilton Hotel over the National Guard Armory for a three-day show and specified that a minimum of 12 and maximum of 16 "diversified" dealers be contracted for the show.

Unfortunately, minutes of many of the meetings in 1963 are missing, including all the

minutes for the first four months of the year. This was a critical juncture for the club because of the decision to change the show to a dealer show. Also simmering in the background was removal of the requirement to discuss all business at the general meeting (a decision that was voted on at the general meeting, by the way). My guess is the sparks were flying because not everyone in the club wanted to move to a dealer show. As in any major change, there are always significant portions of the membership that want to keep doing things the way they've always been done.

Consequently, sometime during 1963 but presumably in the early spring when the Board's decision was brought before the general meeting for a vote, at least a dozen members were so infuriated by the decision to move to a dealer show where tickets were sold for entrance into the show, that they officially resigned their membership in the HGMS. These ex-members started a club called the Houston Lapidary Society. This club also held annual shows for quite some time. The shows were free and carried on the tradition and style of the early HGMS shows. They sometimes held "mall" shows to exhibit their material. Some HGMS members had dual membership in both societies, and invitations to Lapidary Society shows were frequently read at HGMS meetings. However, in the end the new club did not attract sufficient new blood (in contrast to the HGMS which had significant growth in the next two decades), and it eventually dissolved as its members grew old.

**The Shamrock Hilton Hotel**: At this point, the show evolved further into an entity very similar to what we have now. Tickets were sold, and thus the sales chairman morphed into the ticket chairman. Twelve dealers was the standard throughout the remainder of the 1960s because it was felt this was the maximum number we could fit into the Shamrock. This number wasn't increased until 1973 (the reasons for this will be discussed in Part 2). However, eventually the dealer chairman (a new position in 1963) started assuming a lot of power since he was the person with the authority to allow a dealer into the show. This didn't change until the late 70s (which will also be discussed in Part 2).

The first show at the Shamrock went off well. Attendance jumped about a thousand from previous shows and more or less held that number for the remainder of the 60s. Profit margins at the 1963 show and subsequent shows were still in the 40–60% range, but all the financial numbers increased by a factor of three in 1963 and kept climbing as the years passed.

Perhaps I'm biased, but in my opinion, the fact that Irene Offeman accepted the position of publicity chairman for the 1963 show was in large part responsible for the increase in attendance. Her meticulous plans and notes were superbly documented. I was impressed with the fact that she got a dispensation from the city to hang a banner over Main St. at Lamar. Not a small feat!

Also responsible for the success of the 1963 show were the dual show chairmen, Bill Frank and Bill Lathrop. Today we would say that Bill Lathrop was the Assistant Show Chairman, but that position apparently wasn't defined yet. Mr. Frank was an experienced club member who had been around a number of years and had held Board

positions as well as helped with numerous shows*. Bill Lathrop joined the club in 1962 and was already Assistant Show Chairman in 1963. His contribution to our show and club from 1963–1972 cannot be emphasized enough. Appendix 1 describes his legacy.

**footnote: Bill Frank passed away in late 1966, whereupon his wife, Anne, became very involved with the club. She had held positions before, but in 1968 she became treasurer and held that position until well into the 70s. She also was the financial consultant for the show committee in the 70s. She will be further mentioned in Part 2.*

The other major change in the show that was coincident with the move to the Shamrock was the initiation of competitive exhibits and judging. As one might expect, Irene Offeman was one of the leading proponents. Records indicate that 41 exhibits were competitive in 1963, although this number dropped off in 1964 and later. For the remainder of the decade, show chairpersons were continually reminding people to get their competitive exhibits put together for the show, and another annual task of the show committee was to find qualified judges. Dr. Al Kidwell and Dr. Dick Zingula started giving presentations on mineral and fossil identification, respectively, and they assisted people in labeling and showing specimens.

This development led to another interesting idea in the inquisitive mind of Irene Offeman: Identification of specimens. Why, she thought, couldn't we provide this service to the general public? It's a service that we, as rockhounds, continually need, so it follows that the general public should also be in need of this service. With that as the formative idea, another component of the show was born: The Identification Service. The first year for this was 1968 when Irene documented 500 identifications performed by mineral, fossil, and gemologist experts. They had their own special area of the show, and Irene had made up signs listing the experts and the schedules for those experts. She also performed her own advertising to get the word out to the public, thus adding to the publicity effort for the show.

Due to the tireless efforts of Irene, The Identification Service rapidly expanded into a major force within the show in subsequent years, and thus was one of the reasons for the soon-to-come explosion of the HGMS show into the Houston mainstream. The Identification Service will be one of the major topics in Part 2 of this history.

**Federation Affairs**: By today's standards, the Shamrock shows were small affairs held by a small club (less than 100 members in the 60s). Expenses were small, profits were small, and they were space-constrained to only 12 dealers. But we need to put everything in proper context: They had just left the Garden Center, which was miniscule compared to the Shamrock. The club's new digs gave them the space to actually *have* 12 dealers, *plus* working displays and competitive and noncompetitive exhibits. The shows were healthy, showing around 50% profit margin and essentially funding the young club. And in the 60s, organized shows such as this were still not common.

In actual fact, the show was doing quite well by comparative standards. It was known as one of the best shows in the Texas Federation (which soon changed its name to the South-Central Federation and became affiliated with the American Federation). Dur-

ing this era, the club knew that it had a good thing and had investigated having the Federation show in Houston. In the mid-1960s they were told that in order to be considered for such an event, they had to have delegates attend the annual Federation meetings and participate in the regional Federation shows. This they did, with one or more members regularly receiving awards at these events*.

** Footnote: In the 1964 AFMS show in San Antonio, Mrs. George Gains won 1st place in carving, Irene Offeman 2nd place in fossils, Kirby Gee 3rd place in faceting. In the 1967 AFMS show in Washington DC, Irene Offeman won 1st place in fossils. Mrs. George Gains and Irene Offeman were thus awarded lifetime HGMS memberships for their awards in national competition.*

Thus, in 1965 they applied to have the Federation Show in Houston in 1967. Oddly enough, their bid was turned down because "too many of the recent [Federation] shows have been held in this area"! (This was a quote from the general meeting minutes). This is one of the most interesting reasons I've heard for being turned down. However, as a consolation prize, the Federation did suggest that the "little club that could" make a bid for the National Show instead. After some discussion, the club felt that it was not ready for such a large step at that point in their development. So, by 1968 they were deliberately saving as much as they could so they would be ready to host either a Federation Show or a National Show, both of which they realized would have significantly higher expenses than their regular show.

**Epilog**: And thus the stage was set for the sea-change that was getting ready to shake the young club. At the end of the 1960s, they were ready and prepped for the next step which, as history would prove, they would handle admirably. We will discuss these "large leaps for Mankind" (to quote an appropriate expression from that time period) next month with Part 2, starting with the year 1969.

**APPENDIX 1**: The Legacy of Bill Lathrop.

Bill Lathrop was active in the club for 10 years, from his joining in 1962 until leaving after his term expired in 1972 to retire. He had sold his business, Lathrop's Lapidary, in 1971 to Jimmy and John Kachinski (who will be discussed in more detail in Part 2). He had started his business officially in 1967 but was a dealer long before that [he probably was one when he joined the club in 1962].

Because he already was a dealer, he was able to fit right in with the show committee when they started hosting a dealer show. The list of his positions is extremely impressive: 1963: Assistant Show Chairman; 1964, 1965: Show Chairman; 1966, 1967 (?): Dealer Chairman; 1968: Show Chairman; 1969-1972: Dealer Chairman. Add to that list: 1964, 1965: Board of Directors; 1968: VP; 1969, 1970: President; 1971: Board of Directors.

From the recollections of people who knew him as well as references to him in the minutes and show records, we can start to piece together what he was like. He was a soft-spoken fellow but was very nice to others and always helpful in any way he could. He was very action-oriented and obviously devoted to the club. He would be the type of person who would often file motions to do something. His name is often

mentioned as the person giving a program on one subject or another. He and his wife helped with the Christmas party more than once. (His wife, Amy, by the way, was very active also. She took her turn at Board positions, as Treasurer in 1965 and Secretary in 1966, as well as other volunteer committees including the show. She was quiet, but like her husband, had a nice disposition and was always helping as needed).

His legacy with the show covered the first decade of it being a dealer show. This new phase in our show needed someone who knew showmanship and knew dealers. Being a dealer himself as well as having an activist personality, he fit that bill perfectly. Several times he gave programs on the subject of showmanship; in other words, how an individual could display material so that it would be appealing and interesting to others.

There is no doubt he wielded vast influence in the show. Thus, it might be said that the shows from 1963 to 1972 were "his" shows, although that label would probably offend other significant contributors of the time (including the other show chairpersons). To cap off his legacy, his years as VP and President on the Board of Directors were marked by significant movement of a smaller club into a larger, more diverse club. Those changes will be discussed in Part 2.

Such absolute control of dealer access to our show, however, eventually started defining our show, at least as far as other dealers were concerned. This was not a problem (that I could tell) in the 1960s because the show was still quite small. However, it became a significant issue in the later years of his legacy (1969–1972). The economic principles of that era are not apparent to us now (in Part 1 of this history), but the show went through a huge change during the end of his "reign." Since a dealer was essentially required to go through Bill Lathrop to get into the show, it became known as a show that was impossible to get into because he had his favorites and only those favorites got in. This is an issue the club has dealt with throughout its history (club member dealers serving as dealer chairman) and it usually leads to complaints. These issues will be discussed further in Part 2.

**APPENDIX 2**: The Great "Show Number" Conundrum.

In the early years, sometimes the show publicity would not use a show number (see 1960 show card) and sometimes they did (see 1961 show card). However, the ones that did give a number have an puzzling story in mathematics. The 1961 show publicity says that the HGMS was holding its 5th show that year, and in 1963 they say they were holding their 7th show. All is well at this point because that would indicate the first show was in 1957.

However, by 1966, a puzzle had emerged. That show announced that it was the 13th show, 1968 was the 15th show, and onward in succession from there. Now, I'm not a great theoretical mind, but if the 1963 show said it was the 7th show, then how can the 1966 show say it was the 13th show? Was there a time warp I missed? Was Timothy Leary a guest speaker in 1966?

Maybe there was some very "creative" accounting going on in the great minds of the club at that time, or maybe some "show-like" occasions ended up being counted as

hows. It appears that we may be forever stuck with a 4-year artificial "enhancement" in the age of our show. I'll let you know in Installment 2 if I've learned the answer to the puzzle.

**Acknowledgements**: The recounting of the earliest years of the club is made possible only by the efforts of two individuals. Mrs. Alvin Massingill joined the new club in 1949 and became the secretary from 1951 through 1955. She continued being very active, and her name is associated with many events, including the show. In the latter part of the 1960s a new position was created called "Historian." Mrs. Massingill filled that position until her retirement in 1973. During that time, she wrote and otherwise compiled a history of the club from its formation until 1970. Her summaries of the later years (in the 1960s) are merely abbreviated Board and general meeting minutes, but her early summaries (in the 1950s) contain information that is not preserved in the sometimes scanty or missing general meeting minutes. In addition, she assembled and preserved items such as newspaper clippings, photos, rosters, and treasurer ledgers from the early years.

In 1976, Carleton Reid accepted the position as Historian. He held this position until his retirement in 1984 at age 85. Carleton had the job of assembling Mrs. Massingill's historical documents into a form that would withstand the rigors of time. Most of the documents are now contained in two binders for which he had cloth covers made (in the club's burnt orange colors, of course). The documents were all individually placed in plastic sleeves for preservation as some were yellowing and would certainly eventually decompose. It is due to his efforts that the early history is preserved.

A few individuals are still alive and in good health, and contributed to Part 1 of this history. Irene Offeman was an integral part of the club in the 1960s and continued to be active in the Paleo Section until her retirement in the 1990s. She was very diligent in recording and saving an account of what she did with the club and show. After her retirement, hers and Richard's records were passed to me, whereupon they will be properly preserved with the history of the club following the conclusion of this series of articles. I also want to thank her for spending time recounting events of 40 years ago.

Various other individuals have commented on items they remember. Dr. Dick Zingula, Bill Cox, and David Harleston (current owner of Lathrop's Jewelry) have added remembrances of Bill Lathrop, plus general developments in the club in the latter part of the 1960s and 1970s. Bill Cox and Irene Offeman will be two of the major players in Part 2 of this history.


**Figure 1:** (flier 1960) Business card flier announcing the 1960 show in the Garden Center. Notice the lack of a year on the card. Also notice the closing time of the show. At the Shamrock, they went to a full 3-day show with 10-hour Friday and Saturday hours!

**Figure 2:** (HGMS 2nd meeting notice) Notice sent to members present at the first planning meeting to be present for the second planning meeting of the new lapidary club (upper). This notice was spliced onto a newspaper clipping (lower), probably from 1949, showing the founders of the Society along with their wives.

SUPER DUPER SPECIAL NOTICE

The second meeting of the Houston Lapidary Society will be held at the SWAIN STUDIO, 2111 Wheeler, at 8 P.M. December 3, 1948. Those present at this meeting or those signifying their desire to become members will be considered 'charter members'. Final drafting of the constitution and by-laws will be done at this meeting. Please try to be present.

Elizabeth Fulshear
Sec'y-Treas. Houston Lapidary Society

Charter members of the local "Lapidary" movement are the W. V. Vietties, left, and the S. E. Swains pictured busy at this very interesting hobby in the Vietti workshop. Mr. Vietti is inspecting a rough stone of petrified palm root. A production engineer with the Texas Company, he has a collection of rocks and stones from all over the world. Mr. Swain, a geologist with Humble, is a metallurgist by hobby. He made the silver service set for St. James church.—Staff photo by John Hendrickson.

HOUSTON GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY

present its

FIFTH ANNUAL SHOW

at the

DOWNTOWN RECREATION CENTER

MEMORIAL AT SABINE ST

SEPT. 15 – 7:00 P.M. – 10:00 P.M.
SEPT. 16 – 10:00 A.M. – 10:00 P.M.
SEPT. 17 – 10:00 A.M. – 6:00 P.M.

Free Admission Door Prizes

**Figure 3:** (flier 1961) Business card flier announcing the 1961 show in the Downtown Recreation Center. Notice the lack of a year on the card.

2101 Ruth Street
Houston 4, Texas
Dec. 7, 1948

Mr. J. J. Brown, President
State Mineral Society of Texas
302 Walton Building
Austin, Texas

PAGE 1

Dear Mr. Brown:

I wish to report the formation of the Houston Rock and Lapidary Society. Two organizational meetings have been held. The next monthly meeting will be held the night of Friday, January 7, 1949, in the Red Room of the YMCA.

The following officers of the Society have been elected:

W. V. Vietti, Chairman
D. W. Isaacks, Vice Chairman
Mrs. G. N. Fulshear, Secretary-Treasurer
Mr. Richard Peterson, Recording Secretary

Mrs. Jerrie Swain is serving temporarily as Program Chairman and Publicity Chairman. Mr. Isaacks is ex officio Chairman of the Membership Society. We have been given excellent publicity on the formation of this Society by the newspapers in Houston, including photographs by the Citizen neighborhood paper, and this in large part has contributed to the excellent turnout. 28 prospective members met at the Vietti home to discuss the organization of the Society and 26 met two weeks later at the Swain home to discuss the by laws prepared by Mr. W. S. Hawes.

We have over 40 prospective members and list same for your publication: TURN TO PAGE 2

Mr. J. J. Brown -3- December 7, 1948

of and in instruction in their respective crafts. Many of the members have not had access to books and periodicals on the subject but wish to learn. We, therefore, feel that the Society will do a lot of good in offering instruction to the membership, as well as guidance and a source of material. In this connection, we have already made arrangements for one of the members to stock and supply rocks, minerals, lapidary equipment and metal to the members locally, so that we will not have to wait each time we need a certain item and we hope to save the members the disappointments of ordering material which does not match the advertised description.

Yours very truly,

W. V. Vietti

WVV:TG

**Figure 4:** (HGMS Formation) Letter sent by the founder of the Society, Mr. W. V. Vietti, proclaiming its creation to the regional organization. Recognition by the regional organization was a necessary step in our formation.

POLISHING THEM UP—Mrs. Vietti, left, and Mrs. Swain work on some new stones at the polishing wheels in the workshop which Mr. and Mrs. Vietti have outfitted with all kinds of lapidary equipment. Mrs. Swain, who lives at 2111 Wheeler, plans to have a workshop of her own soon.

**Figure 5:** (Chronicle) A quaint newspaper clipping from January, 1949, showing the wives of the Society founders working in the Vietti workshop.


**Figure 6:** (15th annual show) Flier for the 1968 show at the Shamrock. The HGMS emblem shown at top left was the original club emblem and was chosen that year in a club contest.

## ShowTime 2006

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| April 29-30 | Lubbock, TX | Lubbock Gem & Mineral Society |
| May 6-7 | Waco, TX | Waco Gem & Mineral Society |
| May 27-28 | Fort Worth, TX | Fort Worth Gem & Mineral Society |
| May 19-21 | Southgate, MI | MWF & Midwest Mineral & Lapidary Soc.<br>Southgate Arena, 14700 Reaume Parkway |
| May 27-28 | Ft. Worth, TX | Ft. Worth Gem & Mineral Club Show<br>Will Rodgers Memorial Center, Amon Carter Exhibit Hall, 3401 West Lancaster<br>elsiegeorge@aol.com; Elsie K. 817-648-9416 |
| July 14-16 | Houston, TX | International Gem & Jewelry Show, Inc.<br>Reliant Center at Reliant Park<br>info@intergem.net; www.intergem.com |
| August 12-13 | Arlington, TX | Texas School of Earth Sciences |
| August 12-13 | Baton Rouge, LA | Baton Rouge Gem & Mineral Society |
| August 15-20 | Nashville, TN | AFMS, SFMS, & Middle Tennessee G & M<br>Tenn. State Fair Grounds., Creative Arts Bldg. |
| August 19-20 | Bossier City, LA | SCFMS & Ark-La-Tex Gem & Mineral Soc.<br>Bossier Civic Center |
| September 2-3 | Jasper, TX | Pine Country Gem & Mineral Society |
| September 2-4 | Arlington, TX | Arlington Gem & Mineral Society |
| September 22-24 | Humble, TX | Houston Gem & Mineral Society<br>Humble Civic Center<br>5 miles east of Bush Intercontinental Airport<br>1 mile east of Hwy. 59 |
| Sept. 30-Oct. 1 | Denison, TX | Texoma Rockhounds |
| October 14-15 | Temple, TX | Tri-City Gem & Mineral Society |
| October 20-22 | Victoria, TX | Victoria Gem & Mineral Society<br>Victoria Community Center |
| October 21-22 | Glen Rose, TX | Austin Paleontology Society |
| November 10-11 | Leesville, LA | De Ridder Gem & Mineral Society<br>Beauregard Parish Exhibit Hall, 610 West Dr. |
| November 18-19 | Dallas, TX | Dallas Gem & Mineral Society |
| December 1-3 | Austin, TX | Austin Gem & Mineral Society |

| 2006 | | MAY | | | | 2006 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sun** | **Mon** | **Tues** | **Wed** | **Thu** | **Fri** | **Sat** |
| | 1 | 2 **7:30 Board Meeting** | 3 **7:00 Mineral Auction** | 4 | 5 | 6 **10–12 Youth Section 11–5 Shop Open** |
| 7 | 8 **1:00 Day Light Section** | 9 **7:30 Show Comm** | 10 **7:30 Faceting Section** | 11 | 12 | 13 **11–5 Shop Open** |
| 14 | 15 **5:00–7:15 Shop Open 7:30 Lapidary Section** | 16 **7:30 Paleo Section** | 17 **7:30 Mineral Section** | 18 | 19 | 20 **10–12 Youth Section 11–5 Shop Open** |
| 21 | 22 | 23 **7:30 General Meeting** | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 **11–5 Shop Open** |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

| 2006 | | JUNE | | | | 2006 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sun** | **Mon** | **Tues** | **Wed** | **Thu** | **Fri** | **Sat** |
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# The BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

**The Newsletter of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society**

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

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