The BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

The Newsletter of the
Houston Gem & Mineral Society
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President's Message

by Terrell William "Terry" Proctor
2008 HGMS President

It may not be the biggest show on Earth, but it will be close. For months HGMS, and especially the Show Committee members, have been working on putting together a memorable event as we host the regional and national organizations at our HGMS Show, September 26–28. There are still places for volunteers to help out. We can always use folks who want to be involved in this great show—lend your help.

The September issue of *Rock & Gem* magazine should be out by the time you get this e-mail. It has an article which I wrote called "Houston Rocks." It plays up our Show hosting the SCFMS and AFMS, NASA and the fact that they are bringing a moon rock to our Show, the Houston Museum of Natural Science with whom HGMS has had a long affiliation and partnership in many activities, the small Proctor Museum of Natural Science, the fact that there are a number of good dig sites a short distance from Houston, and other positive things about Houston.

Isn't it grand being a Houstonian? People all over the Earth complain about their weather,

Continued on page 4

General Meeting Programs

by Terry Proctor

August 26, 2008: **Patrick J. Lewis, PhD** of Sam Houston State University, has just returned from his dig in South Africa. He promises an exciting program on the cave in which he dug and his prehistoric finds.

September 23, 2008: **NASA** will present a program on extra-terrestrial material.

October 28, 2008: **open** at present, but a program will be scheduled. The Nominating Committee will give their list of nominees for the 2009 officers, and there will be nominations from the floor.

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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 Web site address is **http://www.hgms.org**.

President's Message *continued from page 1*

economics, hostilities, and other negative things, but isn't Houston really a great place to live?

Important H.R. 554: The forces who want to make it very difficult if not impossible for amateurs to dig fossils and collect minerals have been at work. Just before I wrote this column, I learned that the next day there was to be a vote on a bill called the "Paleontological Resources Preservation Act." By the time you receive this issue of the BBG, this vote may already have occurred. It is my hope that the vote to pass this legislation will have failed, and that for the moment we still are free to collect fossils and minerals on federal lands as we have been before this Bill was presented and possibly voted on. You can check on this and other pending Congressional bills by going to http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query.

You can go online and find a list of U.S. Representatives from Texas. There will be addresses, phone, and FAX numbers and an e-mail link. However, most of the Representatives will ask for your zip code, and if you aren't in their district you will see a disclaimer saying that they don't respond to anyone except people in their district. Fortunately we have several Texas Representatives who will accept an e-mail from you, even if you are not in their district. U.S. Rep. John Culver (R) is fighting against this bill, I understand, and we need to thank him for his support of our position. I understand that Rep. Culver has been on digs and is apparently tied in with a rockhound group in Washington D.C. May his tribe increase. Rep. Ted Poe (R) also allows e-mails from Texas constituents, not just his District. I believe Gene Green (D) does also. The following additional Texas Representatives appeared to accept my e-mails to them: Rep. Joe Barton (R); Kevin Brady (R); Rep. Ron Paul (R); Rep. Charles A. Gonzalez (D); Rep Lamar Smith (R); Rep. Ciro Rodriguez (D); Rep. Kenny Marchant (R). Some of those who apparently accepted my e-mail message, also had notices that they wouldn't respond outside their district. I didn't need responses, but hopefully the Rep. reads the e-mails I sent.

I pointed out the fact that HGMS worked with the Scouts on Geology Merit Badges and prepared kits for schools of fossil and mineral specimens. I pointed out that far more fossils are lost each year to erosion than to collection, legal and illegal, and that while some legislation in this area might be needed, the present bill had onerous provisions in it. It provides for criminal prosecution and seizures of all property involved (such as your vehicles, tools, and everything else). It appears to leave the enforcement up to BLM folks and Forest Service etc. This folks are probably well trained in running their mandated services to the public domain, but without extensive training such as HGMS provides to many of our members, these public servants may not be qualified to be the person to determine whether what you are collecting is legal and have the authority to seize your vehicle and charge you with a crime.

I had been told that the Bill only addressed vertebrate fossils. This is not true. It requires a permit, and the items remain the property of the U.S. Government, even after

you take them home. The Act says "the term 'paleontological resource' means any fossilized remains, traces, or imprints of organisms, preserved in or on the earth's crust, that are of paleo interest and that provide information about the history of life on earth, except that the term does not include— (and then it excludes archaeological resource and Native American Graves which are defined elsewhere—more stringently. The Bill doesn't say "vertebrate" but ANY.

The AFMS has been working on this, and so has the ALAA and others. However, if we want to continue to enjoy collecting fossils and minerals on Federal lands, we need to have our membership contact their Representatives not just once, but contact them regularly to ensure that each knows it is not in the best interest of science to preclude amateurs from collecting. My friend and a Board Member of the Proctor Museum, famed paleontologist Peter Larson has appeared before the Congress to testify against this Bill. Thanks to Peter Larson and others. Robert T. "Bob" Bakker, PhD has also testified in the past against this type of legislation. These experts who fight for us try to tell the government that amateurs such as us provide valuable specimens to museums and for scientific study, and that there are never enough folks collecting to prevent the real loss which comes from erosion and other natural forces. So Rockhounds are an asset to the preservation of paleontological resources—not a detriment.

General Meeting Programs *continued from page 1*

November 25. 2008: **open** at present. The Election of 2009 Officers will be held. If there is a contested election, ballots will be mailed out.

December 13, 2008: Christmas/Holiday Season Party at the clubhouse. Meat will be furnished, and HGMS members will bring sides, salads, and desserts.

If you missed the July 22, 2008 General Membership meeting and the program by Terry Proctor on "'The Bone Wars' and Great Paleontologists past and present," you can print out a copy from the Proctor Museum of Natural Science Web site www.proctormuseum.us. Click on MASTER INDEX, then go down to Terry Talks, click on that link, and on that page click on 'The Bone Wars' link.

Day Light Section

by Frances Arrighi
Day Light Chair

Fifteen members attended the 9 June, 2008, meeting of the Day Light Section. Val Link was present, and he gave a short review of patination. He also brought a number of metal pieces that he had treated with various patinas. Two new members attended. They were Margaret Sinclair and Gary Tober.

Thirteen members attended the 14 July meeting of the Day Light Section. We worked on patination. A number of members finished one or more pieces using copper as the metal. Also some of the members took some of the patina solutions home with them to use before the next meeting. Some of the directions call for treating the metal daily for several days.

We will continue working with patinas for the next two meetings.

The Baringer Hill Pegmatite, Llano County, Texas

by Arthur E. Smith
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Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

Introduction

This article on the Baringer Hill pegmatite does not contain new or additional historical data or mineral ogical data, but it is a compilation of published information that was put together for two reasons. Recently some Baringer Hill specimens from the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Science collection were purchased along with other Texas minerals. Also a collecting field trip to the Llano area was carried out during the spring of 2008 with emphasis on possibly similar rare-earth pegmatite collecting in Llano and Burnet counties. It was hoped that such a compilation would help in mineral identification and to understand mineral associations and occurrences in such pegmatites.

Naturally, most important is mineral identification because you cannot completely understand associations and occurrences if you do not know which minerals are which. Usually the most difficult to identify are the metamict minerals, and a review of some is given in Table 1. All of these minerals are glassy, dark colored, and have no cleavage or crystal structure except maybe a crystal form. The hardness can be variable and ranges from 5 to 7, averaging about 6, and generally does not vary enough between mineral species to be useful. I thought densities or specific gravities might be useful, but they also are variable and depend on how completely the minerals are metamict and if there is any alteration. The chart shows the maximum variation I could find from various sources. So generally cross them out as not useful though in special cases they may be.

The color of the specimen is also variable but can be useful. Fergusonite is brown with some black and was the most abundant rare-earth mineral at Baringer Hill. This can be supported by the streak that is also variable but may confirm the color. Other things that may aid identification are crystal form: tabular for allanite and small elongated prisms for fergusonite. All on the chart are radioactive. Yttrialite-(Y) has noticeable and diagnostic waxy to almost glassy yellow-orange alteration, rowlandite that may coat gadolinite-(Y) has a brick red, rare-earth carbonate coating that may form from its alteration. Frank Roberts found out that gadolinite-(Y) is attracted to a strong magnet. Originally it was

described as attracted to an electromagnet as is yttrialite-(Y). Dangle a small piece on a string and see if the magnet moves it. True, these are just clues to possible identification. Naturally an EDS can be more conclusive, but in the field when collecting, you use what you have. I used to think that allanite looked more like broken schorl and gadolinite more like black obsidian, but I found that this not necessarily correct.

The specimens from the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences will be discussed separately with the individual minerals. Aside from getting more specimens from Baringer Hill to observe and their historical value, there is no great revelation from them and the historical data is meager, and except for one specimen there are no dates of acquisition or donation to the Academy. However, in some cases the labels are helpful in establishing a time period when they were sold. Wilson's work (2006 and 2008) was extremely helpful in this regard. I am attempting to get this data from Collector's Edge who has a copy of the Academy collection ledger. In most cases the location data with the specimens is meager, usually giving just Llano County or 5 miles south of Bluffton. However, when reading the early reports of Hidden (1895 to 1905), Niven (1889 to 1930), and Hess (1908), there were few other pegmatites recognized in the Llano County area so Baringer Hill can be accepted as their source with little or no reservations.

Since the establishment of Lake Buchanan in 1937, during times of low-water reveals that the high banks above the Colorado River is littered with many small pegmatite dikes, some containing rare earth minerals. Evidently most of these were hidden by vegetation and alluvium and lack of exploration. When digging out some of these dikes in the bed of Lake Buchanan during 1996, it was evident that they had already been dug out. The smoky quartz crystals were taken and then the area was filled back in with debris and microcline crystals. Some places however had smoky quartz and other minerals littering small areas on the surface, evidently from wave erosion during low water. I am guessing that those dug out were done so after the lake was made and during earlier periods of low water when there was no vegetation or alluvium to hide them.

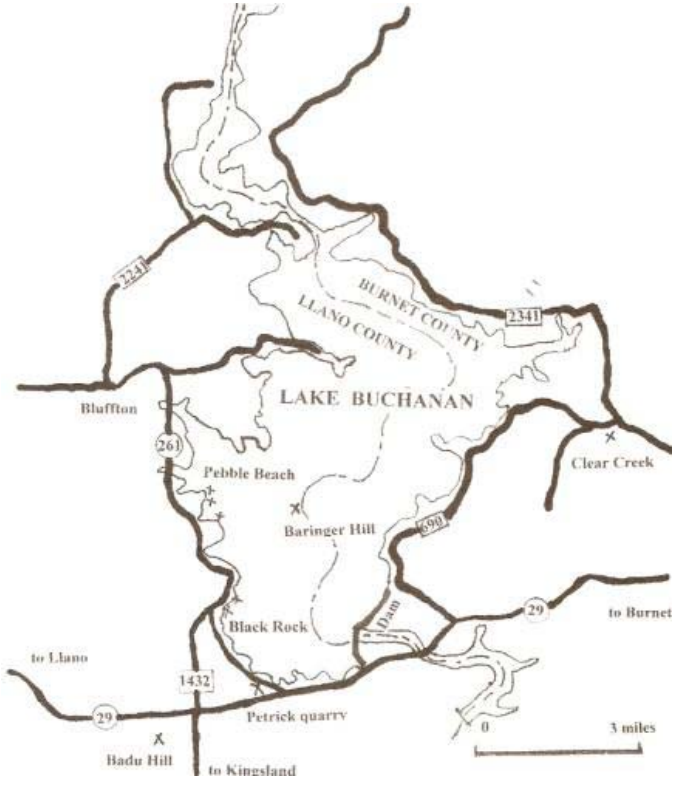
The species identifications of the Philadelphia Academy Baringer Hill specimens seems correct though long exposure has caused some specimens to lose some of their distinguishing color characteristics. Most seem just black, dark gray, or brown. Other char-

acteristics such as associations, magnetic attraction, and form can confirm their identification.

Location & Geology

The Baringer Hill pegmatite is located in eastern Llano County about 22 miles to the northeast of the town of Llano and about 12 miles north of Kingsland. Few of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Science labels have "Baringer Hill" on them. Most just say: "Llano County" or "5 miles south of Bluffton."

The pegmatite formed a low mound in the flood plain on the west side of the Colorado River. Unfortunately the pegmatite was flooded when Buchanan dam was built and closed in 1934.



Location Map of Baringer Hill showing other nearby pegmatites, Llano and Burnet Counties, TX

Originally the pegmatite was a mound about 40 feet high that was about 100 by about 200 feet with its long direction east-west and at a right angle to the Colorado River (Hess 1907). The country rock is a coarse-grained granite porphyry with microcline phenocrysts to about 1 inch long. The pegmatite was asymmetrical and irregular with some zoning apparent and a definite quartz-feldspar core near its center. The quartz-felspar core is prominent and is the highest part of the pegmatite in the last photographs taken in the 1930s (Brock 1932, Keith 1941, Landes 1932). A replacement unit of red albite, quartz, and microcline is the source of the rare-earth minerals. The outer margin is surrounded by a wall zone of classic graphic granite and a zone of alteration 1 to 6 feet thick beyond it. The quartz had distinct white bands from 1/8 to 1 inch wide

caused by small liquid inclusions, many with bubbles. Baringer Hill is a classic NYF Pegmatite (Francis and Lang 1999). It intrudes the Lone Grove Pluton of the Town Mountain granite and is the largest member of a group of pegmatites in Llano and Burnet counties with the NYF signature.

Large amounts of what was thought to be samarskite were discovered in the pegmatite by John Baringer. His name is often spelled "Barringer" but the correct spelling on official courthouse papers is the unusual spelling Baringer (Frank Roberts personal communication). William E. Hidden identified the gadolinite and obtained possession of the property and eventually worked it for the Nernst Lamp Company of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania who worked the pegmatite for the yttrium in the gadolinite for light filaments. However eventually better materials for filaments were used, and there was no further mining for rare earth minerals. Some sporadic feldspar mining—probably for ceramics—was continued into the middle 1920s.

Baringer Hill differs in mineralogy from pegmatites in Burnet County and the Badu pegmatite in Llano County. Baringer Hill was intruded into the Lone Grove pluton while these other pegmatites were intruded into metamorphic rocks. The smaller pegmatites like those at Pebble beach, Black Rock State Park, and the Petrick granite quarry are possibly more closely related in mineralogy to Baringer Hill.

Baringer Hill History

1886 ..... Hill acquired by John Baringer as part of a swap from Mr. Wills for an unpaid debt.
1886, July ..... Baringer recovered first piece of gadolinite. 500 kilos gadinolite recovered
1888 ..... Thought to be samarskite
1888, fall ..... Piece collected and sent to by A. E. Foote to Genth (1989) identified as gadolinite, Hidden also sent some.
1889 ..... William Niven makes a collecting trip for minerals to Baringer Hill, stays 2 months collecting over 200 pounds of gadolinite and exploring by trenching. A second collecting trip was made later in the year.
1889, Dec ..... Analysis published in Hidden & Mackintosh (1889).
1889 ..... Hill purchased by Hidden through Niven. Sold to Piedmont Mining Company; controlled by Thomas A. Edison.
1890 ..... Niven made his 3rd collecting trip to Baringer Hill.
1902-03 ..... Hidden worked the deposit for Nernst Lamp Company who had bought if from Piedmont and was owned by Westinghouse.
1905-6 ..... Last time deposit worked by Hidden for Nernst Lamp Company.
1910-25 ..... Much of the Feldspar removed probably mostly from the dumps.
1932 ..... Deposit was evidently still controlled by Westinghouse because Brock obtained permission from them to visit the property for the last recorded collecting
1937 ..... Baringer Hill flooded by Buchanan Dam and lake Buchanan.

mineral	color	density	streak	Other things
Allanite-(Ce)	black to smoky brown black	3.5 – 4.2	black to gray	tabular crystals, rare
Fergusonite-(Y)	brownish to black	4.2 – 5.8	pale brown	small prismatic crystals
Gadolinite-(Y)	greenish black to black	3.4 - 4.7	greenish gray	large prismatic crystals
Rowlandite-(Y)	drab green	4.4	pale greenish gray	often coating gadolinite, rare
Yttrialite-(Y)	olive green	4.3 – 4.6	white to pale greenish	yellow-orange alteration
Zircon (cyrtolite)	brown, black internally	3.9 – 4.0	brown	usually as crystals with curved faces

TABLE I: IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE METAMICT MINERALS FROM BARINGER HILL AND OTHER RELATED PEGMATITES

Minerals of the Baringer Hill Pegmatite

Albite, $NaAlSi_3O_8$**,** occurs as perthitic intergrowths with microcline. Albite crystals lining cavities are less than 2.4 cm across except in the red rock of Landes (1932) that is composed of albite crystals about 9.6 cm long. Veins of magnetite cut through the albite red rock.

Allanite-(Ce), $CaCeFe^{2+}Al_2(Si_2O_7)(SiO_4)O(OH)$, occurs as tabular crystals and masses that are smoky brownish black to black and have gray streak that is slightly greenish or brown. Density is 3.5 to 4.2. A 300-pound mass of pure allanite was recovered in 1902-03. Landes (1932) reports it the most abundant mineral collected in the sorting and cobbing area, possibly because it contained no yttrium. He claims it differs from gadolinite by having a smooth conchoidal fracture instead of the irregular conchoidal fracture observed in gadolinite.

There were two numbers of allanite from the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Science. Number 7910 consisted of six small pieces that are dull and only bright and lustrous where there are some fresh nicks. They were donated from the Atkinson collection. Most probably from E.C. Atkinson who was a partner in the mineral business with George L. English in Philadelphia from 1887 to 1893 when English bought out the partners Atkinson and Niven and moved his operations to New York City (Wilson 2008). Number 19033 is a single specimen about 6 by 5 by 3 cm that is a lustrous black and is more typical of allanite. It was a George English specimen donated by E. D. Drown. The English label with offices in New York on Broadway would date this specimen from 1890 to 1892 when it was purchased possibly by Drown (Wilson 2008). Analysis of Baringer Hill allanite by Marble (1940):

CaO 8.48%
MgO 0.15%
Ce_2O_3 ..... 10.58%
La_2O_3 ..... 11.97%
Yt_2O_3 ..... 0.81%
FeO-Fe_2O_3 ..... 14.90%
Al_2O_3 ..... 19.09%
SiO_2 ..... 29.89%
ThO_2 ..... 0.82%
H_2O et al. 04.32%

Autunite, $Ca(UO_2)_2(PO_4)_2{\cdot}10\text{-}12(H_2O)$, is a yellow fluorescent, secondary uranium mineral that may coat fergusonite (Landes 1932).

Biotite, $KFe_3^{2+}AlSi_3O_{10}(OH)_2$, was observed by Hidden in large black books and is associated with the rare earth minerals. Thin books with albite were collected by Landes (1932). Hidden (1905) reports that it contains cesium and rubidium and is close to lebidomelane in composition.

Chalcopyrite, $CuFeS_2$, has been reported in small amounts by Hidden in Hess (1908).

Chalcopyrite, $CuFeS_2$, occurs in small quantities.

Fergusonite-(Y), $YNbO_4$, may form elongated pyramidal prismatic crystals that are a dull brownish black but are brilliant on fresh fractures. It has a pale brown streak and is the most abundant rare-earth mineral at Baringer Hill and occurs with the cyrtolite variety of zircon and thorogummite. Aggregates of fergusonite up to five pounds were recovered in 1902-03. Density is 5.6 to 5.8.

Fergusonite-(Y) is represented by four numbers in the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences collection. All except one represent multiple specimens, and number 24132 is a bag of mostly small specimens that contains mostly fergusonite-(Y) but also includes some gadolinite-(Y), zircons variety cyrtolite, and one flat pink to reddish brown garnet piece. No source is given for these specimens, but they look like someone had just walked around the surface of the pegmatite, picked them up, and given them to the Academy. Specimens (5) under number 7898 are all dark brown to black with irregular shapes, and one has two-centimeter size inclusions of gray molybdenite. The William Niven label would date this specimen at 1890 (Wilson 2006, 2008). Specimen 7940 is large and consists of fergusonite with patches of pale red feldspar with numerous crude zircon (cyrtolite) crystals to two cm and small elongated fergusonite-(Y) crystal pieces that someone has attempted to etch into relief, but obviously most of the fergusonite-(Y) crystals broke. It was donated from the Atkinson Collection. Specimen number 19176 is an A. E. Foote specimen donated by E.D. Drown. The small Foote labels have been glued to each specimen.

Analyses of Baringer Hill fergusonite-(Y) from Hidden and Mackintosh (1989):

CaO ..... 2.74% 0.14%

Y_2O_3	32.36%	42.33%
U_2O_3	3.98%	-
U_3O_4	3.12%	1.54%
ThO	0.83%	3.38%
FO	3.75%	0.98%
Nb_2O_5	42.79%	46.27%
H_2O	8.19%	2.02%

Fluorite, CaF_2, was observed in large crystalline masses with some large crystal faces but no complete crystals. It ranges from colorless to a violet so dark that it looks black. The lighter color generally is segregated alone in the quartz. At warm temperatures, some of the fluorite becomes luminous without ultraviolet radiation.

Gadolinite-(Y), $Y_2Fe^{2+}Be_2Si_2O_{10}$, forms prismatic crystals terminated by a pinacoid or a pyramid. Crystals and masses may be quite large. It is vitreous to greasy and black, greenish black, or brown with a greenish gray streak. It often may have a brick red or yellow alteration coating. A 73-pound group of double crystals collected in March 2003 was considered by Niven to be the greatest group of crystals. In 1903-04 about 1000 pounds of pure gadolinite were recovered. The largest specimen measured 36 by 11 inches. Density ranges from 4.36 to 4.77.

Philadelphia Academy of Natural Science specimen number 24674 is a real treasure. It measures 12 by 11 by 7.5 cm and is a crude partial crystal with two distinct prism faces and one pyramidal face. It is mostly covered by the brick red material that is said to be the alteration of rowlandite that might have at one time coated the specimen. This red material is a rare earth carbonate. In one place the lustrous black gadolinite shows through, and its weight and radioactivity would indicate that most of the specimen is still gadolinite. It came with a George English label number 282 that dates the specimen from 1889-90 and was probably purchased by the Academy from him during this time.

Analysis by L. G. Eakins in Hidden & Mackintosh (1889) and by Genth in Hidden and Mackintosh (1889).

	Eakins	**Genth 1**	**Genth 2**
SiO_2	23.79%	22.87%	22.80%
FeO	12.42%	13.69%	12.93%
BeO	11.33%	09.24%	09.19%
Ce_2O_3	02.62%	02.65%	02.66%
$(Di,La)_2O_3$	05.22%	05.22%	05.01%
$(Y,Er)_2O_3$	41.55%	44.35%	44.35%

Garnet was observed as a small flattened mass with no faces observed. It was a pink to red brown and found in Philadelphia Academy of Natural science specimen 24132.

Hematite, a-Fe_2O_3, is present in small amounts. Martite, hematite after magnetite, has been reported by Niven (1930).

Ilmenite, $Fe^{2+}TiO_2$**,** was observed in radiating groups of sheets or blades from 2.4 to

16.4 cm in width and to 6 mm thick. It usually occurs in groups in selected areas and may be associated with large sheets of biotite.

Lanthanite-(Ce), $(Ce,La,Nd)_2(CO_3)_3{\cdot}8H_2O$, was observed as incrustations on allanite - (Ce) from which it alters (Hidden in Hess 1908). It occurs as white, pink, and colorless platy to tabular crystals elsewhere.

Lepidolite is reported, but its occurrence is doubtful here.

mackintoshite = thorogummite

Magnetite, $Fe^{2+}Fe_2^{3+}O_4$, occurs with no impurities as black spheroidal granular masses, thin veins in albite red rock and crystals.

Microcline, $KAlSi_3O_8$, is usually perthitic (intergrown with albite). It is pale brown to red and occurs in large crystalline masses over 30 feet in diameter. Terminations are not common but do occur, and twinning plains may be evident.

Molybdenite, MoS_2, in gray plates to 12 cm wide, may form masses to over 10.5 pounds. Centimeter-size pieces were observed in fergusonite-Y masses from the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Science (specimen 7898).

Molybdite, MoO_3, occurs as white to greenish white and rarely apple green plate in cavities (Hidden 1905).

Muscovite, $KAl_2[]AlSi_3O_{10}(OH)_2$, as a lithia mica occurs as small flakes 1.2 cm across in cracks of quartz.

Opal, $SiO_2{\cdot}nH_2O$, variety hyalite, is reported by Niven.

Orthoclase, $KAlSi_3O_8$, is described with microcline by Hidden and Mackintosh. At the nearby Petrick pegmatite, it is mostly white while the microcline is reddish. The variety adularia is mentioned by Comstock, but it is doubtful at Baringer Hill and not mentioned by later investigators.

Polycrase-(Y)—Euexenite-(Y), $(Y,Ca,Ce,U,Th)(Ti,Nb,Ta)_2O_6$, occurs in black grains, small masses, and plates associated with ilmenite. It contains 25 percent yttrium and is very radioactive. Its density ranges from 4.7 to 5.9.

Powellite, $CaMoO_4$, occurs as white crusts lining cavities and sugary white radiating or plumose crystals 0.6 to 1.8 inches long. It is rarely greenish, and fluoresces yellow under shortwave radiation.

Pyrite, FeS_2, was observed in cubic and octahedral crystals (Hiddenite in Hess 1908)

Quartz, SiO_2, as milky quartz occurs in large banded masses. Extremely large crystals of smoky quartz were found in large vugs that weigh to 1000 pounds. Amethyst, some of gem quality occurs in crystals 2.4 by 1.2 cm in feldspar.

Rowlandite-(Y), $Y_4Fe^{2+}Si_4O_{14}F_2$, occurs with gadolinite and is a drab green and rarely red, but alters to a waxy brick red that may coat gadolinite. These are carbonates of rare earths and lime. It is more lustrous than gadolinite, and thin pieces are transparent. The powder or streak is a light greenish gray. Density when metamict is 4.39. A pure mass of rowlandite, recovered in 1902-3, weighed 1 kilo.

Rowlandite-(Y) is number 20904. It is a 2 cm specimen that was given to the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Science by the Yale (Peabody) Museum. It has a Brush label with a note on the label recording that it was received from W. E. Hidden in 1899. Brush retired from Yale in 1898 and donated his collection to the Peabody Museum in 1904. So the Academy obtained it after that date (Wilson 2008). The specimen does not react to an electromagnet, so it probably is rowlandite-(Y) though the greenish color is hard to detect, and it appears more grayish that green.

Analysis A shows elements more than 1% by Crook et al. (1978). B is from Hidden.

	A	B
Fe_2O_3	3.96%	4.48%
SiO_2	26/12%	26.04%
ThO_2	1.34%	0.59%
Y_2O_3	29.44%	47.70%
Ce_2O_3	3.7%	5.06%
Nd_2O_3	1.65%	-
Sm_2O_3	2.65%	-
Gd_2O_3	4.51%	-
Tb_2O_3	1.32%	-
Er_2O_3	6.16%	-
Yb_2O_3	5.78%	-
Dy_2O_3	5.08%	-
F	4.62%	3.78%
La group	-	9.34%

Rutile, TiO_2, has been observed as prismatic and yellow sagenite reticulated crystals to 0.25 inches.

Sphalerite, ZnS, has not been specifically identified from Baringer Hill, but the zinc in fergusonite analyses indicates that it is probably present (Hidden in Hess 1908).

Tengerite-(Y), $Y_2(CO_3)_3$ 2-3H_2O, forms white globular masses and as crystals, alone to 1.5 mm and in nests of crystals. Globular and flat radiated concretions in cracks and fissures of gadolinite. Analysis of Hillebrand in Hidden (1905):

Y_2O_3 etc.	40.8%
Ce_2O_3 etc	7.0%
CaO	8.3%
BeO	9.7%
Fe_2O_3	4.0%
CO_2	19.6%

Thorogummite, $Th(SiO_4)_{1-x}(OH)_{4x}$, is a dull yellowish brown to reddish. Only about 2 pounds were collected by Niven. Density is 3.26 to 5.44. About 50 pounds were recovered in 1902-03 with some pieces weighing a pound and some as good crystals. A and B. are Thorogummite (mackintoshite) from Hidden (1893). C. is from Hidden & Mackintosh (1889). Landes (1932) noted it as a brick red resinous alteration of uraninite.

	A.	B.	C.
SiO_2	13.90%	13.92%	13.09%
UO_2	22.40%	21.86%	22.03%
ThO_2Ce?	45.30%	Lost	41.44
PbO	3.74%	3.92%	2.16%
FeO	1.15%	-	0.90%
H_2O	7.85%	-	-

Tveitite-(Y), $Ca_{14}Y_5F_{43}$, occurs as white to cream-yellow irregular inclusions, 1 mm or less in yttrian rich fluorite. It imparts a strong yellow-orange fluorescence to the fluorite under shortwave ultraviolet radiation. The fluorite normally has a cream to pale orange fluorescence (Crook 1987).

Uraninite, UO_2, was erroneously named nivenite. It occurs in cubic crystals and masses. It is intimately associated with cyrtolite and thorogummite. It is velvety black in color with a brown-black streak with a density ranging from 10.62-10.95. A. Analysis, nivenite, from Hidden & Mackintosh (1889) B. is from Hillebrand, U. S. Geological Survey Bulletin 78:

	A	B
UO_2 -UO_3	66.64%	65.06%
ThO_2	7.57.%	6.69%
Y_2O_3 etc.	11.22%	11.82%
PbO	10.16%	10.08%

Vesuvianite, reported but not confirmed.

Yttrialite -(Y), $Y_2Si_2O_7$, occurs on gadolinite as olive-green masses with conchoidal fracture when fresh, but alters to a diagnostic yellow orange material. Also in large masses, an 18-pound mass was recovered in 1902-03. Green masses have a muddy color caused by inclusions. The density is 4.56 to 4.58.

The Philadelphia Academy of Natural Science specimen numbered 19968 is from the U.S. National Museum. It is a 4 cm specimen and mostly a lustrous dark gray, but the back side has minute fragments of the typical yellow orange alteration that helps confirm its identity.

Analysis is from Hidden & Mackintosh (1889):

SiO_2	29.17%
ThO_2	12.00%
Ce_2O_3	1.68%
FeO	2.89%
Y_2O_3	46.50%
Re_2O_3 etc.	2.49%

Yttrocrasite-(Y), $(Y,Th,Ca,U)(Ti,Fe^{3+})(O,OH)_6$, is black with a pitchy to resinous luster. Thin splinters are red to pale yellow. Crude crystals showing three pinacoids, prism, and orthodome. A. is an analysis of specimen from Burnet County, 3 mi. E of Baringer

Hill by Warren in Hidden and Warren (1906):

	A.
TiO_2	49.72%
WO	1.89%
$(Yt, Er)_2O_3$	25.67%
Ce_2O_3 etc.	2.92%
Fe_2O_3	1/44%
ThO_2	8.75%
UO_2	1.98%
CaO	1.83%

Zircon, $ZrSiO_4$, variety cyrtolite occurs as brown crystals with curved faces. Internally the crystals are darker and may be black. They occur with fergusonite and are radioactive and contain yttrium. Analysis of Hidden and Mackintosh (1889) indicates it contains 31.36 to 42.33 percent Yttrium and 42.79 to 46.27 percent niobium. Landes (1932) mentions it as an important source of hafnium.

Unidentifed yellow mineral occurs with brown fergusonite-(Y) in a specimen under the number 24132 from the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Science. It is a pale yellow and occurs as mats of acicular crystals. It is nonfluorescent under short wave radiation and was not observed on any other specimens in this lot or other specimens from Baringer Hill observed by the author.

I would like to thank Frank Roberts and Nancy Farah who were with me on my collecting trip to the Hill Country in May and who critically read this manuscript and offered suggestions, corrections and additions.

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July Lapidary Meeting

by Stephen Wilkerson

Treasury: Payment has been made for the restock order of templates. We should receive them sometime in August.

Education: Charlie Fredregill will be teaching a wire wrapping class in August.

I have received an e-mail from some new members asking about a cabochon cutting class. I will check with the new Education Chair and find out when one can be scheduled.

New: It has been determined that 12 members of the Lapidary Section are owed their Quixotic badges. The silver sheet to make them has been added to the sliver order Mary Ann Mitscherling is making.

Samples of the two new template designs have arrived and were passed around. Several people are eager to try the lightning bolt shape. Mary Ann moved that we increase the order from 100 to 250 units to get the better price break. Phyllis George seconded, and the motion was approved.

There are several members of the club who will be recognized by the AFMS for articles and poetry submitted to the BBG. A detailed list is on page 31.

Show & Tell: John Zanders brought the finished earrings he was working on when he presented the March program. He also brought a letter opener made of brass and pewter, a silver bell with an agate clapper, and a cast pewter dish.

Tom Wright had information about bronze casting and asked if anyone was interested in trying it.

Margo Bedman passed the diamond lab in her GIA course, correctly giving the quality of several diamonds and their value.

Program: For tonight's program, Tom Wright talked about his 1982 trip to China when China had only recently opened its doors to allow Americans to enter the country. On the flight into China, Tom was given several gifts, including a bag of candy, a mirror and comb set, and several paper fans with the airline name and other business logos for advertising. He still has all of these, although the candy doesn't look too good any more.

When Tom arrived, he bought whatever caught his eye—ornaments, a box of chopsticks, a beautiful hand painted tray that he never used. He went to what the Chinese called a "Friendship Store," which was the only place you could spend American dol-

lars. He bought Chinese playing cards, a lighter, a pocket knife, wood carvings of fighting fish, and other ornamental trinkets.

He was taken to visit a carving factory. In it he saw several rows of wooden work benches with piles of what looked like rice on them. The "rice" was a pile of freshwater pearls. The girls working at the benches were hand drilling the pearls. He was amazed at the lack of safety equipment—no masks or eyewear, or water to wash the dust away. Tom bought several strands. The pearls still have a beautiful rainbow iridescence.

Tom also went to a shop where they made hand carved bone letter openers. While they were all similar in design, there were enough differences in size and shape to show that they really were hand carved. He also showed us several carved ivory figures he had picked up; one of a Chinese dragon and another of a woman standing among trees. The intricate details are amazing.

One of the most interesting things Tom saw was from his hotel window. There was a construction site across the street and Tom got to watch the workers. Usually, when American workers hear the whistle blow, they put down their coffee and head to their job assignments. Chinese workers are already working when the whistle stops blowing. The workers also had onsite showers and food provided by the company.

Tom bought several pieces of carved stone, including a jade Buddha and some painted soapstone carvings in the shape of a crane and a pheasant. But one piece of jade came to him while he was eating dinner. A man walked up to him and offered to make him a seal with his name on it. Tom was intrigued and bought three of them the next morning. The seal is carved as a Chinese lion, with Tom's name in English on the bottom.

One of the hardest problems Tom had in China was getting something to drink with his meals. The Chinese thought all American women should get orange soda, and all men got beer. So they constantly gave him beer, which he doesn't like.

The most delicate thing Tom brought home from this trip was a carving from a piece of cork—a three-dimensional carving of trees on a hillside. It was framed between two pieces of glass. The details are so fine, you can see individual leaves on the branches.

Tom had a Polaroid camera with him and took a lot of pictures; Tiananmen Square, several temples, and a little boy who caught his eye. The boy was with his grandfather and as the picture developed, a crowd gathered around him to watch. When he gave the picture to the grandfather, Tom said it was like he had given him a million dollars. The look on the gentleman's face and the reaction of the crowd touched him.

Late-Breaking Club News

Are you getting e-mails about HGMS activities? If not, contact n_immega@swbell.net and let him know that you want to be on the list.

In Our Library

by Art Smith, Librarian

Like a lot of other places in the clubhouse, the library is pressed for space. To add more new and more significant magazines and books, the less-used materials will be done away with—or more likely—will be kept in storage in the loft. This is particularly true of the VHS videos. There has been a drastic reduction in their use the last two years. I mentioned at the General meeting that we needed to make DVD copies, but since most of our videos are copyrighted, I did not know the legality of doing that. Most of these videos have not been released in the DVD format, so the general consensus was that it was legal to make copies as long as they are backup copies to what we have. Any further discussion is welcome, and you can e-mail me at artsmithite@msn.com. My current plans are to start on this in a couple of months and to merge the VHS material after some reduction with the DVD. The VHS will have cards in them to check out, but the DVDs will continued to be signed out on sheets at the desk.

I am a bit behind in indexing new journals and publications, so if there is something you cannot find, we may have it and I can tell you where it is. The binding is pretty well caught up until the end of the year, but I am having rebound a few older volumes that are falling apart.

Any questions, comments, and suggestions are welcome. Just contact me. I have recently obtained the updated, 2007 version of *Genuine Diamonds Found in Arkansas* by Glenn Worthington plus the DVD video.

Please Update Your E-mail Addresses

by Neal Immega

The following members are not receiving e-mail notices of club activities because we cannot figure out your e-mail address. Please send a note to n_immega@swbell.net to get on our list.

Boman	Larry
Clarkson & S Yodern	Sandra
Dickerson	Stephanie
Holden	Don
Husmann	Carl
Matthews	Linda K
Melancon	Joseph & Rose
Ottosen	Ben
Ottosen	Kim & Nate
Collins	Louis & Judy
Pote	Jerry
Rich	Bernard
Rigo & Canh D Dang	Paula A
Touchard	Myriam

HGMS Rocks HMNS

RockFest!, *June 19, 2008*
by Neal Immega

The Houston Museum of Natural Science (HMNS) depends a lot on revenue earned from visitors because it gets no subsidy from the City of Houston. This means that they really work hard to attract the public with special exhibits. Some special exhibits are very successful at drawing visitors (*e.g.* 500,000 for *Body Worlds 3*) but much of the gate from outside exhibits does not stay at our Museum. However *Geopalooza!* is a self-created exhibit consisting largely of things that will eventually go on display in the expanded Paleontology Hall (finished maybe in 2010), and the museum keeps the entire ticket price.

Geopalooza! is billed as a "Hard Rock Anthology," but let's not get picky about the geological definition of a "hard rock" and just glory in what is there—trilobites and other fossils, minerals, fluorescent display, huge geodes, petrified wood, gold panning, and small geode cracking. Wow, this sounds like publicity for our Houston Gem and Mineral Society (HGMS) annual show!

Nancy Fischer and friend working with trilobite eyes

This means that our members are really comfortable in this exhibit and have demonstrated superior docenting skills (ability to talk the hind leg off a rhinoceros). When the promotions folks at the Museum were told to put on a "Big Show" to publicize the exhibit, they naturally thought of us.

We staffed kid-craft tables where trilobite eyes were created from marbles and dino skeletons were fabricated from pipe cleaner; we orated over a table full of meteor-wrongs (and one meteor-*right*), demonstrated fossil prep, and showed off George Wolf's amazing vertebrate fossils and Scott Singleton's popular petrified wood. Naturally my own activity was the biggest and best (because I am writing this article)—agate polishing. We had three grinding machines from the clubhouse and 300 agates. Visitors could grind and

George Wolf and his amazing vertibrate fossils

Scott Singleton and his petrified wood specimens

Sigrid Stewart teaching visitors how to make a cabochon

polish a window on an agate in less than 2 minutes—really. Okay, truth in advertising requires me to mention that visitors to Matt Dillon's grinding station took a whole lot longer, but they got a really superior product! People were openly amazed that a wheel could grind a rock but not a finger—a real kid-safe operation. We made so much noise that we drowned out the *Guitar Hero*® contest next door. The museum staff finally shut us down about 3 p.m. by taking our tables away from us—but we had pretty much run out of agates by then anyway.

The *Geopalooza!* exhibit has one thing that our show lacks—hard rock background music. Fortunately it is not terribly loud, and they do play a rock song about trilobites! Really! by Robyn Hitchcock. Part of his deathless poetry:

Clicking away for a second of fame
A billion years later they give it a name
They call it

Trilobite, right Dwight's in the light-bite
Trilobite, right in the light-bite, Dwight.

Okay, it is not great, but do you know another song about trilobites? Complete lyrics at http://tinyurl.com/6hjq33

I think this is a classic example of "Doing well by doing good." We talked up the club and distributed lots of literature, and I expect to see lots of new faces at the shop. We commonly heard "I did not know there was a group like this in Houston." HGMS really rocks!

Geopalooza! runs until Au-

Jill Rowlands explaining a display of slabs, spheres, and geodes.

Stan Perkins cleaning

gust 24, 2008. See http://tinyurl.com/66l8of . Standard heads-up applies: if you haven't seen it yet, do so soon—don't wait until the last day.

2008 National Gem and Mineral Show

by Scott Singleton
HGMS Show Chairman

Fellow Houston Gem and Mineral Society members, I would like to extend this invitation to you to join me and the rest of the 2008 HGMS/AFMS Show Committee in attending our 2008 AFMS/SCFMS Annual Show. We believe that the show we have been preparing for the last 12 months will impress everyone coming from around the country specifically to attend our great show. Of course, those of us who regularly attend and help out with our show might not notice much difference because we know that we *always* put on a wonderful show.

However, notwithstanding this fact, the AFMS Liaison Committee—Shiara Trumble, Michele Marsel, Nancy Fisher, Chuck Schuler, and I—has spent this past year preparing for the added responsibilities that accompany a special event such as this. Please see Shiara's article on the events this committee has organized for our national delegates.

I also encourage you to be active in your HGMS club membership by participating in the following events leading up to and during the 2008 AFMS Show:

Annual Labeling Party: Saturday, August 23, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the clubhouse. This is where we all put in an hour or two labeling our wonderfully-designed tri-fold

fliers (which take the place of our usual postcard this year), help the School Collections Committee put together the Show School Sets, and then get treated to a wonderful lunch hosted by the Show Hospitality Committee. Please show up to help out your fellow club members.

Pre-Show Kick-Off Dinner and Auction: Saturday, September 6, 5 to 9 p.m., at the clubhouse. This is our big pre-Show event. The Show Hospitality Committee will serve dinner beginning at 6 p.m. We want to start early so the auction can "kick off" about 7 p.m. As always, you can help this year's Kick-Off Dinner be successful by bringing desserts and items for the auction. Don't have a garage sale, donate some rocks! Your duplicates and leaverites are someone else's new treasures. Please feel free to drop off donations in advance at the clubhouse office in the box marked "2008 Show Auction."

Load Up: Wednesday, September 24, 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the clubhouse. On the Wednesday night before the show, we load up the U-Haul and volunteer vehicles with items to be transported to the Humble Civic Center. Many hands make for light work.

Setup Day: Thursday, September 25, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., at the Humble Civic Center. We will need volunteers beginning at about 8 a.m. to unload the U-Haul truck and cases. Members of each Section must be prepared to set up their own booths. We will also need to drape about half of the dealer tables. The dealers start arriving at 11 a.m. to begin their own set-up, but work on the Section booths will continue.

Volunteer and Dealer Appreciation Dinner: Thursday, September 25, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Humble Civic Center. We host this dinner every year to show our appreciation to all of our volunteers and dealers. Following dinner, lifelong mineral collector David Wilbur (now associated with the HMNS) will give our presentation for the evening. Many of you heard him recently at the General Meeting where he gave a very entertaining presentation on some of his experiences and showed some fantastic mineral slides.

Please join us for all these events and help us make this show one that the entire country will be talking about for some time.

The Show Is Coming! The Show Is Coming!

by Shiara Trumble

Houston Gem and Mineral Society's annual show has plenty to offer every year for rockhounds, faceters, lapidaries, paleo people, and the general public. This year we have the special honor of hosting not only local guests but also the AFMS and SCFMS annual conventions, plus the Texas Faceters' Guild Annual Symposium is being held nearby on that Saturday and Sunday.

The Federation conventions bring us both competitive and noncompetitive exhibits from across America that add beauty and educational content to our show.

There will also be fun and educational displays from the Rollin' Rock Club, ALAA (The American Lands Access Association), the AFMS Endowment Fund, AFMS Jun-

ior Activities including Rocks & Minerals, Earth Resources, Fossils, Lapidary Arts, Collecting, Showmanship, Communication, Field Trips, Leadership, Earth Processes, Earth in Space, Gold Panning and Prospecting, Gemstone Lore & Legend, Stone Age Tools and Art, and Rocking on the Computer, and AFMS Conservation Committee.

The Texas Faceters' Guild will also have a display of replicas of world-famous diamonds cut by TFG members.

Be sure to stop by these displays and learn more about each of the organizations and their activities.

In addition to our club's silent auction held at the Information Booth throughout the show, there will be a **silent auction to benefit the South Central Federation's Endowment Fund**. Visit their table at the front of the HCC on the west side to see all the goodies they are offering for auction.

There will be a **live auction to benefit the American Federation's Scholarship Fund**, held in the Scout Room at the HCC on Friday, September 27 at 2:00 pm.

Joyce Speed will be taking contributions for the AFMS Endowment Fund at the show. For each $5 gift, Joyce will issue a ticket for the **Endowment Fund Drawing** for lovely donated items. The items may be viewed at the AFMS Web site: http://www.amfed.org/endow2008.htm. Winners will be announced at the Awards Banquet on Saturday night.

Additional Show Activities

If you are interested in attending the following events, please sign up early. Registration forms can be found on the HGMS Web site. Click on "2008 Show Registration" and print the registration form. Please fill it out and send it in to me at the address shown on the form by August 24 so we have time enough to plan meals, as well as having the guides needed for the field trips. If you have any questions or want to volunteer your time to help with any of the events, please call me at 281-463-7954 or e-mail me at Shiara.trumble@sbcglobal.net.

Breakfast with the Editors is being held at the Humble City Café on Saturday morning, September 27 at 8:00 a.m. Join us for a wonderful breakfast buffet and see your fellow rockhounds rewarded for their writing efforts. Start writing, and who knows—you could be a winner, too!

The Awards Banquet will be held Saturday night, September 27 at 7:00 p.m. in the Humble Convention Center's Hospitality Room. CW Smokehouse and Catering will be cooking the barbecue in our parking lot, so come to the banquet and have some of that barbecue you'll be smelling all day!

Field Trips

On Friday, September 26, there will be a guided **field trip to Whiskey Bridge** to collect mid-Eocene invertebrate fossils. This begins at 8:00 a.m. at the HCC parking lot. Those signing up will be given further instructions. You can access a description of

this field trip on our Web site: www.hgms.org. Click on "2008 Show Registration" and scroll down to "Whiskey Bridge Locality Description."

On Sunday, September 28 at 10:30 a.m., we have a trip planned to the **Houston Museum of Natural Science** and **a guided tour of the HGMS clubhouse**, with light refreshments available. You may also return directly to HCC rather than going to the clubhouse, if you wish.

There will also be a **tour of the clubhouse leaving directly from the HCC** at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, without going to HMNS, for those who want to see the clubhouse and prefer a shorter trip.

All club members are invited to participate in all the above activities and to visit all the special federation displays. It's a great way to get to know rockhounds from all over the U.S., learn something and have fun, too!

Scout Geology Badgeathon at HGMS Show

by Mike Reves

"Half a league, half a league,
half a league onward;
all in the valley of Scout Badges
rode the six hundred ..."

(From "The Charge of the Light Brigade"
with apologies to Alfred Lord Tennyson)

Yes, that is how many young Scouts will charge the registration table for the Geology Badgeathon at our annual show. Classroom instruction starts off with three twenty-minute sessions covering the general categories of rocks and minerals, environmental subjects, and finally geophysics. At the end of the classes, we help start their required collections with samples of igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary rocks, and then we may throw in a fossil or two. After the classroom sessions, the Scouts fan out to other stations to round out their instruction and to gather more items for the required collections.

The other stations include the Paleo Section and Mineral Section, Houston Museum of Natural Science, and Houston Geological Society. The Scouts are required to find the answers to geology questions at each of the stations. They may get free samples, too. Then, of course, the rest of the show is a feast of information and examples of our hobby.

Scott Singleton leads the group of members who bring this unexcelled geology badge experience to the Scouts. The group includes a core of Mike Bieniek, Elsa Kapitan-White, Clay Keifer, Mike Reves, and David Temple, who are closely associated with the classroom instruction. We recruit qualified Geology Badge Counselors from the scouting world to help with the instruction. Other members of the club provide support at their various stations around the show. This educational outreach to the community is a very fulfilling experience for our club members.

Mad Science program

Watching a lapidary demonstration of a spool polisher

Learning about sharks

Dinosaur-related crafts

Show Education Committee

by Lexy Bieniek

The Show Education Committee tackles the challenges of teaching the public about rocks, fossils, gems, Earth processes—you know, all of those fabulously interesting topics that are missing from the Texas schools AND that HGMS does an absolutely fantastic job on because those are just the topics we love.

Our best work is done during the show. “School Daze” is our invitation to all of the educational entities in the area to bring their students to the show. Students each receive a “Scavenger Hunt” which is a series of questions submitted by dealers and by

the Sections of our club. The Scavenger Hunts require the students to watch the demonstrations, interact with the Mad Science, peruse the Rock Food Table, touch fossils, and gaze in wonder as the minerals change colors under ultraviolet light.

Then there is the "Dino Dig"! Out the side door of the Convention Center, kids enthusiastically chip away at the concrete to free the plastic dinosaurs and other precious "gems," creating racket beyond compare.

Saturday and Sunday are Scout Days. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts come to the show to work on Badges. Boy Scouts work on the Geology Merit Badge. Girl Scouts complete requirements on the Rocks, Rock! Badge requirement stations are located throughout the show, and the kids must rotate from station to station to complete the requirements. At the end of the day, the Scouts have finished a large portion of the requirements.

All these activities take a great number of volunteers. Come join us in all the fun!

Swap Area at the Show

by Steve Blyskal

There will be a Swap Area at the show this year. It will be located as usual in the glass wall annex on the east side of the convention center, in the same room as the Youth Section booth and activity area. Our tables will follow the curve of the wall across from where the Youth Section will be set up. There are plenty of floor outlets in this area, so swappers can have lights at their tables.

As in the past few years, the Swap Area will operate on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. We expect to have many children at the show on Friday, and many of the swappers have minerals suited for beginning collectors. The Swap Area will be open from 9–6 on Friday, 9–6 on Saturday, and 10–4 on Sunday.

As in past years, those who have minerals, fossils, or polished stones they would like to swap can bring them to the area and trade them with the swappers who have set up. Swap dollars will also be available for those who do not have an item to trade. Swap dollars work like this: one of the swappers has a piece of petrified wood that you want. You work out a price of $15.00. Then you go to the booth where swap dollars are sold, give them the $15.00 in cash, and get 15 swap dollars. The 15 swap dollars are given to the swapper and you get the petrified wood. So what does the swapper do with the swap dollars, you ask? He has until the end of the show to go around to the dealers and find items that he wants. Then he pays for the item with the swap dollars.

How does this benefit everyone? You, the customer, get a good deal—you might save some money buying in the Swap Area. The swapper gets rid of the material he has on hand—stuff he has found, or cut or traded for, for example. The dealer gets the money that might not have been spent otherwise.

The swappers can use up to two tables, if available, at a charge of $6.00 per table for the show. Material that can be put out at the Swap Area includes minerals, rocks, fossils, and equipment. Also cabochons, faceted stones, and jewelry made by the seller.

No commercially made jewelry is permitted. Swappers can reserve a place at the Swap Area by calling or e-mailing the Chairman, Steve Blyskal. Table space is limited. There are rules for using the Swap Area, and violators may not be given table privileges. Swappers are expected to help man the booth to sell the swap dollars, and volunteers from the show committee are also asked to help. This is one of the more popular volunteer activities since you get to sit down and talk to friendly people. Instructions are provided on how to handle the exchange of cash for swap dollars and how to handle other situations that might arise.

Swap dollars are valid for merchandise at the show up until 6 p.m. Sunday 9/28/08, at which time they become void. That is why the Swap Area closes early on Sunday, to allow the swappers time to go spend their swap "money." Dealers redeem their swap dollars at the end of the show for cash. Therefore **all money** spent in the Swap Area eventually goes to the dealers in the show.

If you still have any questions about the Swap Area, want to participate and swap, or just want to help sell swap dollars for an hour or two, you can call Swap Area Chairman Steve Blyskal at 832-264-1278 after 7 p.m. in the evening.

General Meeting Minutes

July 23, 2008
by Nancy Fischer
HGMS Secretary

Terry Proctor called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

The minutes of the June General Meeting were approved as published in the June BBG. Matt Dillon moved to accept the minutes; George Tober seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Terry Proctor said that Club Treasurer Rodney Linehan gives a full financial report to the Board of Directors. The Club is still solvent.

There were several visitors. Bernard and Megan Valles, a father and daughter, vacationed in Gem Mountain, North Carolina and came back with bags full of rocks. They came across the Club information while doing research.

Another guest, Drew Moore, came with his grandfather, Jim Felder. Drew is visiting from South Carolina. He has been chatting on-line with Denise Bicknell and other club members and decided to check out the club.

Scott Singleton mentioned that there are several important Show-related dates coming up:

August 23 (Saturday): The post card labeling event and the assembly of school kits. This year Steve Blyskal is putting together a new set. It is called "Economic Minerals." Steve needs help in labeling the minerals for the sets.

September 6 (Saturday): The Show Annual Auction and dinner party. It starts at 5:30 p.m. with a social hour, dinner is at 6:30 p.m., and the auction begins at 7 p.m. Scott

said to bring a dessert and something for the auction. The Hospitality Committee will provide dinner.

September 24 (Wednesday): Loading trucks at the clubhouse in the late afternoon

September 25 (Thursday):- Thursday setup at the Humble Civic Center, 8 a.m. to 12 noon.

September 26-28 (Friday–Sunday): The Show

Scott and John Mitscherling asked for volunteers. Scott passed the volunteer spreadsheet around. John mentioned that if you sign up early, you can get your choice of times and activities before the time slots fill up.

Terry Proctor related that he purchased Glenn Kuban's dinosaur tracks and would make them available for display at the Show. He needs volunteers to man the dino track display. Glen Kuban is to prepare information on where the tracks were taken, how he made them, and other details. Terry will then hold a very short training session for those working the booth to go over the Kuban information so the volunteers are prepared to discuss the casts with the public.

Terry displayed one of the mugs he ordered made for the Proctor Museum. He is having a gross made for the Club, and these will have the HGMS logo on them. He and Michele Marcel are designing them. The mugs will be available for sale at the show for $15 or less.

Phyllis George said the deadline for September's BBG is August 6. She will begin working on it August 9. She received a post card from Linda Jagger who is responsible for AFMS article prizes. Several HGMS members are in the top ten in their categories and as such will receive either trophies or certificates: James Wark and Owen Martin in the adult article division, Art Smith and Mark Villanueva for advanced adult articles, and Mary Ann Mitscherling and Terry Proctor in the poetry division. The trophies and certificates will be awarded during the show at the Breakfast with the Editors being held at 8 a.m. Saturday.

Old Business

Art Smith asked for ideas for what to do with the VHS videos in the Library. They are not being used, and they take up a lot of space. He is considering transferring them to DVD. They are not available commercially in DVD format. Matt Dillon suggested that Art make a list of the videos he intends to remove from the Library to see if Club members would want them.

Terry brought up that the Club would be voting on the Code of Conduct as published in the July BBG. He then mentioned that the present provisions for publishing a matter to be voted on made it almost two months before the matter could come to a vote, and suggested that if someone moved to dispense with the 30 days after publication wait requirement and it passed, we could vote tonight instead of waiting another month. Terry had explained that the Bylaws provide that a matter must be published for 30 days before a vote, but that actually it is close to two months from publication before a

meeting is held at least 30 days after publication. That was the reason he brought the matter up, as the time lapse made the vote quite distant from publication. There being no motion, the matter will be voted upon at the August 26, 2008 General Meeting.

New Business

Beverly Mace reported that the 2008 roster is in the mail, and there are 20 more members than last year. We have over 500 adult members and over 100 student members.

Terry Proctor won the door prize, which was donated by James Wark, last month's winner. It was petrified wood form Madisonville, Texas. John Anderson also donated a piece of howlite, and he showed and passed around another piece which he had dyed with Rit dye 50 years ago and made into a bolo tie. Terry mentioned that there were several months this year when the person who won the door prize in the previous month, did not bring the prize for the next month's General Membership meeting. For instance, James Wark did not receive a door prize last month. Terry has left word for the prior month's winner to remind him to bring James' prize. Terry plans to provide a better means of reminding winners to bring the next month's door prize.

Steve Blyskal and Sigrid Stewart brought in pictures of their recent trip to Belgium and France. They visited a former Club member, Marc Jauniaux and his wife. Marc makes occasional trips to Houston as he is managing a plant in Deer Park. They went to several cities in Belgium including Brussels, Bruges, and Ghent among others. They also drove to the Ste. Marie aux Mimes rock show in Alsace Lorraine. Steve took over 1,900 pictures and will give a presentation this fall at one of the Mineral Section meetings.

The rock show attracts over 25,000 people to a town of 1,000. There were 650 mineral dealers and 300 gem and jewelry dealers in the four-day show. Sigrid displayed some of the photos she had taken of places they visited. Steve passed around photos he had taken at the show.

Program: Terry Proctor presented "**Bone Wars**." He also talked about some famous paleontologists in history and some of our contemporary great paleontologists.

The "Bone Wars" were an interesting part of U.S. History, and it produced many paleontological discoveries that probably would not have been made otherwise. The "War" was also responsible for the naming of many fossils. Edward Drinker Cope and Othniel Charles Marsh initially were great friends, and they were both interested in the study of fossils. At the beginning, they even named dinosaur species after each other. However, their subsequent rivalry spurred each on to discover and name more species, and they resorted to bribery and skullduggery to achieve their goals. The rivalry turned into bitter enmity after Marsh embarrassed Cope who attached a head to the wrong end of an Elasmosaurus, and did not heed Marsh's warning about his mistake.

Terry also discussed famous paleontologists: Joseph Leidy, Roy Chapman Andrews, and the current "rock" stars Robert T. Bakker PhD, Peter Larson, Paul Sereno PhD, and Patrick J. Lewis PhD.

He talked about the privilege and fun of going on a dig with Dr. Bakker and related the somewhat sad story of Peter Larson's trials and tribulations after making the discovery of Sue, the most complete Tyrannosaurus Rex ever excavated.

Dr Lewis presently is teaching at Sam Houston State University and will present the program for the August 26 HGMS General Meeting. He has been involved in the Fayum, which is an Eocene/Oligocene fossil locality located in the eastern Sahara Desert of Egypt. Found at this location were more species of prehistoric primates in one place than anyplace else on Earth. This summer, Dr. Lewis has been in Botswana digging in a cave. He reported to Terry Proctor that he has found the oldest true elephant and believes he has also found the oldest black Rhino.

You can find the complete presentation and more about Terry at the Proctor Museum Web site, www.proctormuseum.us.

Board Meeting Minutes

August 5, 2008
by Nancy Fischer Secretary

X	President	Terry Proctor		Faceting Rep.	Phyllis George
	1St Vice President			Lapidary Rep.	Karen Burns
X	2nd Vice President	Beverly Mace	X	Mineral Rep.	Denise Bicknell
X	Treasurer	Rodney Linehan	X	Paleontology Rep.	Rick Rexroad
X	Secretary	Nancy Fischer	X	Day Light Rep.	Tom Wright
X	Past President	Matt Dillon			

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Terry Proctor, President.

A quorum was present.

July 2008 Board of Directors Minutes were distributed via e-mail. Tom Wright moved, seconded by Matt Dillon, that the July 2008 minutes be accepted as distributed. The vote was unanimous.

Treasurer's Report: Rodney Linehan reported that he made a payment of $1700 for postage for Show-related mailing. He also e-mailed monthly statements to the Board.

Tom Wright asked how Rodney determined the value of the Clubhouse. Rodney said he brought the value forward from previous years. There was a stated value of the land, and he depreciated the building.

Terry Proctor said he will probably have money left over from the $200 he was allocated for purchasing the Grand Prize for the Show. Amber Way, a long-time dealer at our show, will donate $100 toward a piece of their amber jewelry. Terry will also provide one of his dinosaur tracks casts for reimbursement at his cost. He will give the remainder back to Rodney.

Committee and Section Reports: There were no Committee or Section reports.

Review of Action Items from last Board meeting: Many items are covered below. The remaining are included in the Action Items for this month.

Old and New Business:

1. The Dues Review Committee consisting of Terry Proctor, Rodney Linehan, and Karen Burns presented their findings to the Board. Their findings are that the Club takes in about $30,000 in revenue and is expected to spend about $40,000. The Show contributes $10,000–$15,000, and dues contribute about $12,000. Classes and auctions are the only other sources of income. Dues are the only item the Board can control. HGMS membership dues have not been raised for eight years while operating expenses have increased every year. For instance, the manager of the Humble Civic Center recently announced that the cost for using the facility has substantially increased. This will reduce the anticipated net revenue from the show.

   There was a discussion comparing annual dues to things like sporting events, eating out, movies, and the like. The Board members thought that the proposed increases are still a wonderful value.

   Tom Wright said that Article 3, Section 3 of the Bylaws states that the Board needs to publish suggested dues increases in September so the General Membership can vote at the October meeting. If approved, the increase would take effect in January 2009.

   Tom Wright moved that the dues be increased as follows:

   Individual from $30 to $40
   Couples from $40 to $60
   Family from $50 to $75
   Children from $8 to $25

   Matt Dillon seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

2. There was a discussion about Life Membership which is currently $200. Denise Bicknell moved to increase Life Membership to $500. In addition there will be a freeze on Life Memberships until the increase take effect in January 2009 if the General Membership approves the increase. Tom Wright seconded the motion which was accepted unanimously.

3. Terry Proctor said that he would form a committee to identify and request grants for the Club.

4. Beverly Mace reminded the Board that at the Show, the Club usually has special membership offers. After a brief discussion, it was decided that the Club will offer half-price memberships for the remainder of 2008 at 2008 prices. Paying full price for dues at the show at the suggested 2009 prices entitles one to membership for the remainder of 2008 and all of 2009. If there are any changes from these amounts, those members who are affected will be notified and adjustments made.

5. Terry Proctor has mentioned that under the current Bylaws, there must be at least

30 days between publication of a motion in the BBG and voting by the General Membership. This means that a motion published at the beginning of one month cannot be voted on until the end of the next month because the requisite 30 days has not elapsed. This causes delays of almost two months from the time a suggested change in the Bylaw is published until it is voted on. Nancy Fischer moved to change the By-laws so that an action could be voted on by the General Membership at the end of the month in which a motion was published in the BBG. Rick Rexroad seconded the motion which passed with six in favor and one opposed.

6. Phyllis George requested expanding the BBG to 44 or 48 pages until the end of the year. It is currently limited to 40 pages. It was brought up that Phyllis has received a lot of articles and would like to be able to include all of them this year so they will be eligible in SCFMS and AFMS competitions. HGMS members traditionally do very well in these competitions, but the tendency is to submit the articles in the latter part of the year. Terry said the National Show would have some impact as well.

   Denise Bicknell said that Club business should be published first and articles as space allowed. Tom Wright calculated that the expanded version of the BBG would cost the Club an additional $200 for a four month period for printing alone, not including additional postage. Rick Rexroad observed that it did not seem responsible to increase cost to the Club at this point.

   Matt Dillon moved to increase the BBG to 44 pages, limited only to the four remaining 2008 issues. There was no second, so the size of the BBG will remain at 40 pages.

   It was suggested that Phyllis could set guidelines for length of articles and deadlines for competition articles.

7. The Physical Facilities Committee had a meeting by teleconference. Terry reported that it is the consensus of the group that a new building or expansion of the present building should not be considered at this point. However, a building fund should be established to be used only for a new building, expansion, or a major expense—not for normal maintenance. Denise Bicknell moved that a building fund as described be established and that Rodney Linehan be authorized to write a check for the minimum deposit required by the Bank to open an account that has no fees attached to it. Matt Dillon seconded the motion which was unanimously accepted.

8. Tom Wright mentioned that fees for classes have been $10 per hour since 1986. According to the By-laws, the Education Director sets class fees. After a brief discussion it was determined that Tom would ask Bill Rogers, the new Education Director to raise class fees to $15 an hour.

   There was also some mention that Bill Rogers is supposed to be setting up an e-mail address where he can be contacted to schedule classes.

9. Terry Proctor needed a copy of the Club's 501c3 acceptance in order to activate

the Kroger card which rebates a percentage of purchases to the Club. Neal Immega informed him that a copy was on the Web site.

10. Terry Proctor reminded the Board that Dr. Patrick J. Lewis will present the program at the August 26 General Meeting. Dr. Lewis will report on his dig in northwestern Botswana where he found the oldest true elephant and possibly the oldest black rhino fossils.

11. Beverly Mace received a donation of rocks, geodes, and equipment. The donor specified that the gift or any proceeds should be used for education. Some of the equipment is already in use in the shop. Rocks are being used by the Youth Group. The remainder will be sold in conjunction with a lapidary auction, and any revenue derived from the donated items will be kept separate.

12. Tom reported that there is a Freon® leak in the air conditioning system, and the repair could run over $1000. Rick Rexroad moved to authorize Tom to select a contractor and have the work done. Matt Dillon seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Hints & Tips—Henry's Helpful Hints

by Henry Wilson
from American River Currents, via The Rocky Mountain News 1/2984, SCRIBE Summer 1985, and The Pineywoods Rooter 11/2007

1. Don't try to cut and polish cabs while watching TV.
2. Always walk uphill while collecting large specimens.
3. Tin oxide will not work as well in your coffee as Cremora.
4. Most good gemstones can be dug up only during a rain or snow storm.
5. All worthwhile gemstones are a good 500 miles away at the end of a dirt road at about 8,000 feet elevation.
6. If you can't identify a mineral, call it jasper. No one else will know either.
7. Don't spill dop wax on your wife's kitchen stove.
8. Don't store tumbled stones in the candy dish.
9. There are approximately 135 ways to polish jade, most of which won't work.

SCFMS Future Rockhounds Forum

by David and Carol Abbott
SCFMS Juniors Program Co-Chairs
"Talking about various things"
from SCFMS Newsletter 5–6/2008

Well, you haven't heard from us in the last several issues of the newsletter. Probably the best way to describe our nonparticipation would be that we had a "crisis of faith." Our belief systems are intact, but our belief in ourselves needed some help.

Carol was active in our home club's junior's program for a total of some 10 years either as a helper, assistant, or a leader. David was active about half that time—usually as a helper, but in an assistant role in the final couple of years. About three years ago, Carol came to the conclusion that her health made her unreliable and that the juniors deserved a more consistent leader.

In the last couple of years, the junior's program in our home club has seen a dramatic drop in participation. During that same time, we experienced conflicts that precluded our participation in the SCFMS convention and show. And, we have received only two contacts in response to our newsletter articles. All of the above led us to question whether our involvement was adding any value. Our fearless newsletter editor has been consistent and convincing about the value to be found in these messages. So our thanks to Paul Good, and our apologies to anyone who missed this part of the newsletter.

Leaders of any not-for-profit group will encounter many more complainers than helpers and many more negative comments than comments of encouragement. And although everyone needs a break now and then, please don't follow our example into a crisis-of-faith.

We were giving some thought the other day to human nature. And it seems that we all like new ‘'stuff" (at least until we run out of space). Juniors are no exception, and are even more excited about new "stuff." When one combines that with the mystique surrounding many stones, and the amazing availability of "stuff" on the Internet (and eBay in particular), there seems to be a new opportunity for juniors programs.

Subject to your club's rules and approvals, it seems that a voluntary program could be established in each club to help build the collections of your juniors. For example, what about a $1 per month contribution (by each junior or sponsoring adult) to buy some of the more "exotic" stones. As the money accumulates, a designated adult could purchase lots of stones.

A check of eBay revealed some recent opportunities:

* Aquamarine ..... 1300 cts for $10
* Emerald ..... 500 cts for $5
* Ruby ..... 100 gms for $10
* Sapphire ..... 300 gms for $10
* Topaz ..... 1300 cts for $8

Obviously, these will not be high-grade stones. However, this creates opportunities to introduce the fact that every stone is unique, varying from really ugly to incredibly fine—and, that one must learn how to recognize which stones have the potential to be awesome. Depending upon your particular group of juniors, one might also explore the ancient myths and legends that led to the mystique around certain stones. Alternately, you could have the juniors do research on their own for a discussion at the next meeting.

Good Luck! David and Carol

ShowTime 2008

August 23-24	Jasper, TX	Pine Country Gem & Mineral Society VFW Hall, FM 2799 and FM 1747 Lonnie Stalsby; rducote@cmaacess.com
August 30-31	Arlington, TX	Arlington Gem & Mineral Society Arlington Convention Center 1200 Ballpark Way; Karen Cessna 817-903-5980; cessnak@ont.com www.agemclub.org
September 20-21	Richardson, TX	Pleasant Oaks Gem & Mineral Club EMGI at Brookhaven College; 3939 Valley View Ln; Don Shurtz 972-509-2821 don.shurtz@gmail.com; www.pogmc.org
September 26-28	Humble, TX (Houston)	Houston Gem & Mineral Society hosting the 2008 AFMS and SCFMS Shows Humble Civic Center, 8233 Will Clayton Pkwy. 5 miles east of Bush Intercontinental Airport 1 mile east of Hwy. 59; www.hgms.org Scott Singleton, fossilwood@comcast.net
September 27-28	Denison, TX	Texoma Rockhounds Denison Senior Center
October 9-11	Mount Ida, AK	World Champ. Quartz Crystals Digging Contest; Mount Ida Area Chamber of Commerce Montgomery County Fairgrounds, Fairgrounds Rd.; Maureen Walther, (870) 867-2723 www.mountidachamber.com director@mountidachamber.com
October 11-12	Temple, TX	Tri-City Gem & Mineral Society Mayborn Civic Center, 3303 N. 3rd St. Les Connally 254-939-7015; loconn@aol.com
October 17-19	Victoria, TX	Victoria Gem & Minerla Society Victoria Community Center, 2905 E. North St. Ken Lemke 361-575-5350; klemke@vctx.org
October 24-26	Austin, TX	Austin Gem & Mineral Society Palmer Events Center; 900 Barton Springs Rd. Susan Postlethwait, 512-458-9546 gemcapers@austin.rr.com
November 1-2	Midland, TX	Midland Gem & Mineral Society Midland Center

2008		September				2008
Sun	**Mon**	**Tue**	**Wed**	**Thu**	**Fri**	**Sat**
	1	2 7:30 Board Meeting	3 7:30 Mineral Section ?	4	5	6 10–12 Youth Section 10–5 Shop Open 5-9 Preshow Dinner/Auction
7	8 1:00 Day Light Section	9 7:30 Show Committee	10 7:30 Faceting Section	11	12	13 10–5 Shop Open
14	15 7:30 Lapidary Section	16 7:30 Paleo Section	17 7:30 Mineral Section	18	19	20 10–5 Shop Open 10–12 Youth Section 1:30 Beading Group
21	22	23 7:30 General Meeting	24 5-6:30 Loadup for show	25 Show Set up Dealer/Vol. Dinner 6:30	26 HGMS Show Kids Day	27 8:00 Breakfast with Editors HGMS Show 7:00 Awards Banquet
28 Show Tour of HMNS & HGMS	29	30				

2008		October				2008
Sun	**Mon**	**Tue**	**Wed**	**Thu**	**Fri**	**Sat**
			1 7:30 Mineral Section	2	3	4 10–12 Youth Section 10–5 Shop Open
5	6	7 7:30 Board Meeting	8 7:30 Faceting Section	9	10	11 10–5 Shop Open
12	13 1:00 Day Light Section	14 7:30 Show Committee	15 7:30 Mineral Section	16	17	18 10–5 Shop Open 10–12 Youth Section 1:30 Beading Group
19	20 7:30 Lapidary Section	21 7:30 Paleo Section	22	23	24	25 10–5 Shop Open
26	27	28 7:30 General Meeting	29	30	31	

The BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

The Newsletter of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

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