



# The Stone Chipper

Each one teach one



## Presidential Message

Well Rocking Hounds,

Did you all enjoy your holidays--Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza, New Year's Eve? Well, your new and old Board met Tuesday and we got all kinds of items taken care of. I will admit that I was disappointed that more of you did not show up for the monthly fun we have. And I want to thank all of you who do keep an eye on club business by participating in the Board meetings.

We have an exciting year coming up, and we need club-wide participation. So as many as possible please show up for our Show Committee meeting so we can get a great start because believe me it is not just a meeting. You get to see the real nitty gritty of old rockers who know how to put together a really great show for October 2015.

Our next get-together is with the Mineral SIG on Tuesday, the 13th, we will be presenting a mini seminar on how to exhibit and display your items for our Show. I really would like a lot of members to take pride in their items and show them off, so join us and have some learning fun!! Bring your minerals, your dazzling minerals, for all to see.

Two days later, on the 15th, we have our Show Committee meeting, which should be a real eye opener, in a good way. Come and learn and get excited about this very big upcoming event.

THE AUSTIN GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY, INC. (AGMS) is a member in good standing of the South Central Federation of Mineral Societies and the American Federation of Mineral Societies. Its editors are also members of SCRIBE. The club address is 6719 Burnet Lane, Austin, Texas 78757, and phone (512) 458-9546. The AGMS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Visit our website at [www.austingemandmineral.org](http://www.austingemandmineral.org) Contact our webmaster for website updates at [DiannH@austingemandmineral.org](mailto:DiannH@austingemandmineral.org).

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the AGMS is to promote interest and education in the various Earth Sciences and other related subjects.

### MEETINGS

The society meets at 7:00 p.m. the fourth Thursday of every month except October, which is show set up day. The November meeting will be held on the THIRD Thursday. December is the Officers' Induction Banquet held on a date to be determined. Board meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month. Show committee meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month. All meetings are open to anyone. Society officers are listed on the second page of this publication. Please feel free to contact any of them for information

### Dues for 2015

Annual membership dues are:

Adult-\$30.00      Couple-\$40.00      Junior--\$4.00

## Table of Contents

- Board Meeting Minutes.....Page 3
- Hunts & Events.....Page 4
- Club Classes.....Page 5
- Request for Hosts.....Page 5
- Minerals Theft.....Page 5
- Blue Amber.....Page 6

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Federation/Conservation - Josie Middleton

Historian - Vacant

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Membership -Susan Postlethwait

Scholarship - Stretch Young

School Programs - Wing Evans

Sergeant-at-Arms - Jackie Fisher

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*President's Message cont' from p. 1*

Then the following Thursday, January 22nd, WOOHOO, we all get together again at our General Meeting. I look forward to that monthly opportunity to see old members, meet new folks, learn new things about minerals and the club, and share some good snacks.....Be safe in your travelling around Austin, that traffic can be horrendous!!!

Cheers,  
 Josie Middleton, President

**AGMS**  
**Annual Gem & Mineral Show/**  
**AFMS Annual Meeting**  
**October 2015**

## AGMS Board Meeting Minutes

January 6, 2015

Members present: Josie Middleton, Les Postlethwait, Ron Carman, Craig Brandt, Dee Fly, John Curtright, Deborah Johnson, and Sian Schilhab. A quorum was present.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Alan Cherepon, past president, reported that as yet he has no information on the cost of new lamps for the fluorescent display case. He expects to know more by this coming March and will report it to the Show Committee when he does.

Susan Postlethwait, Show Chairman, showed examples of revised AGMS membership applications. After discussion, all Board members approved.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Susan also provided copies of revised AGMS brochures and new member information for the Board to see and discuss. The Board also approved them, with some minor corrections as discussed.

The Board next looked at the pending contracts with the Doubletree Hotel for the upcoming AFMS show in October 2015. After discussion, the Board decided to stay with the first contract dated 9 September 2014, which allows a block of 25 rooms for four nights.

Board member Deborah Johnson had made some suggestions for welcoming and orienting new members to AGMS. The Board discussed various possible ways that current members might help visitors and new members feel welcome and be introduced to AGMS activities.

Josie made some announcements, including that Jeremy Smith has given the AGMS another donation of display specimens and we need to provide a place to display them.

Dee Fly noted a few minor corrections that should be made to the club newsletter, the *Stone Chipper*.

After discussion, Josie agreed to contact the editor to have them made.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Ronald R. Carman, Secretary*

*There was no General Meeting in December*

*We Wish You Well!*

The club extends best wishes for a speedy recovery to Bob Folsom, Cindy Murphy's father, who broke 3 ribs in a recent fall.

**THANKS!**  
The Austin Gem and Mineral Society would like to thank Jim and JoAnn Wiersema and Cora Caffey of **Horizon Environmental Services**, for their continuing support of the club by printing *The Stone Chipper* each month.

### Sign up for the AGMS List

If you are currently not a member of the AGMSList and would like to be, please email Diann at [general@austingemandmineral.org](mailto:general@austingemandmineral.org). It's the best way to keep up with the latest AGMS happenings.

## Hunts & Events



**Jan-Feb, 2015**--Qartzite, AZ annual rock and fossil swap meet. [www.xpopress.com/QZ-show-schedule.html](http://www.xpopress.com/QZ-show-schedule.html)

**Jan 17-18, 2015**—Hill Country G&M Show, Fredericksburg Rockhounds; Pioneer Pavilion, Lady Bird Johnson Park, 3 miles south of Fredericksburg on Hwy 16; Minerals, fossils, meteorites, jewelry, geodes, stone carvings, exhibits, demonstrations, raffle prizes, hourly door prizes, children's activities; good food; free admission, free parking. Contact Jim Gedeon, [gedeonjim1@gmail.com](mailto:gedeonjim1@gmail.com) or 830-685-3342. Web site: [fredericksburgrockhounds.org](http://fredericksburgrockhounds.org)

**Jan 23-25, 2015**-- Tyler Gem & Mineral Show, Rose Garden Center, 420 S. Rose Park Dr., Fri. 9-5, Sat 10-6, Sun 10-5. Adults--\$5, Children--\$1  
Contact: Keith Harmon, 903-795-3860; email: [keithharmon19@yahoo.com](mailto:keithharmon19@yahoo.com)

**Jan 31--Feb. 15, 2015**-- Tucson Annual Gem, Mineral & Fossil Showcase, Tucson, AZ., featuring over 40 different sites, most free and open to the public. For information, <http://www.visittucson.org/events/gem-show/>

**Mar 7-8, 2015:** Annual show; Gulf Coast Gem & Mineral Society, Richard M. Borchard Regional Fairgrounds; 1213 Terry Shamsie Blvd; contact Linda Simpson, 1302 Annapolis Dr, Corpus Christi, TX 78415, (361) 877-5820; e-mail: [lsimp@swbell.net](mailto:lsimp@swbell.net); Web site: [www.gcgms.org](http://www.gcgms.org)

**Mar 7-8, 2015**—Big Spring Annual show; Big Spring Prospectors Club, Howard County Fair Barn; Big Spring Rodeo Grounds; contact Lola Lamb (243) 263-3340; e-mail: [lolabellelamb@yahoo.com](mailto:lolabellelamb@yahoo.com)

**Mar 21-22, 2015**—San Antonio 54th Annual Fiesta of Gems; Southwest Gem & Mineral Society; 8111 Meadow Leaf Dr. [Corner of I-410 W and Marbach] Contact ROBERT BOWIE, (210) 860 2830; e-mail: [krbotx@gvvc.com](mailto:krbotx@gvvc.com); Web site: [www.swgemandmineral.org](http://www.swgemandmineral.org)

**Apr 11-12, 2015**—Abilene Show and Sale; Central Texas Gem & Mineral Society, Abilene Civic Center; N. 6th and Pine; contact Kay H. McDaniel, (325) 668-8558; e-mail: [kmcdaniel23@suddenlink.net](mailto:kmcdaniel23@suddenlink.net); Web site: [rockclub.txol.net](http://rockclub.txol.net)

**April 17-19, 2015**--Alpine Show & Sale, Chihuahuan Desert Gem & Mineral Club, Alpine Civic Center; 801 W.Holland Ave. (Hwy.90); FREE Admission!; Contact Judith Brueske, (432) 244-9503; e-mail: [jbrueske@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jbrueske@sbcglobal.net)

Apr 25-26—Waco Annual show; Waco Gem & Mineral Club, Extraco Events Center; 4601 Bosque Blvd., Creative Arts Bldg.; Contact Andrew McDonald, (254) 366-3846; e-mail: [babydocmac@aol.com](mailto:babydocmac@aol.com); Web site: [www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/)

### Stone Chipper Ads

*The Stone Chipper* can now accept non-political AGMS Board-approved paid advertising. If you are interested in placing an ad or have questions about the process, please contact *Stone Chipper* editor Carolyn Perkins at [stonechipper@austingemandmineral.org](mailto:stonechipper@austingemandmineral.org).

You can choose from a variety of sizes for your print-ready ad:

Full Page (7" x 8") (\$100 per issue)

Half Page (7" x 4") (\$50 per issue)

Quarter Page (3 1/2" x 4") (\$25 p.i.)

Business Card (3 1/4 x 2) (\$12.50 p.i.)

There is no extra charge for full color, but mail out copies will be black and white only.

### General information about Club Classes

There is a notebook at the front desk during general meetings with class sign-up sheets to be on waiting lists. Once there are enough club members and an available instructor, a class is scheduled. Past classes have been held in seed beading, bead knotting, wire wrapping, cabling, doublets/triplets, faceting and metalsmithing. There is no regular set schedule for classes. Club members on a waiting list are notified when a teacher is available and everyone in the class agrees on a good date. So it's best to go ahead and get on the list since those people are given priority in scheduling. If anyone is unable to attend a general meeting, they can send me an email to be on a list.

There is also a blurb on the AGMS website under "Education" with a link to the monthly calendar where class openings (if any) are listed. Since anyone on a waiting list is given priority, sometimes a class is full when it appears on the calendar.

If an instructor is available on given dates and there are not enough people for a particular class, I send out a notice on the Yahoo List.

The club depends on its members to teach classes, so we're always looking for volunteers. If you or someone you know has a special talent and would be willing to teach a class, please contact me for more information.

Joyce (email: [classes@austingemandmineral.org](mailto:classes@austingemandmineral.org))

### HOSTS WANTED: URGENT NEED

At our 2015 annual show, Gem Capers, will host the SCFMS & AFMS National show this year. The dates are Oct 23, 24 & 25.

But do you also know what else is happening that same weekend? The Formula One United States Grand Prix at the Circuit of the Americas track.

And this means that the hotels have raised their rates, a lot.

We are looking for AGMS members who are willing to open their homes to fellow rock hounds who will be traveling to Austin from around the country. If you have a room or two please consider hosting for our show. It goes without saying you already have something in common with out of town guests.....ROCKS! And will probably make a new friends that will know all the good spots for rock hounding in their part of the country!

Contact the show committee, Ron Carman or myself for more information and to offer up a room! -- Respectfully, Susan Postlethwait

### *Minerals Theft!*

*This information comes to us from Bill & Cheryl Wildfong, newsletter editors and webmaster for the Fredericksburg Rockhounds Club. They received it from Steve Shearin, Commissioner of the Cowtown Gem, Mineral & Glass Club:*

Denise Dodge's rock and gemstone collection was stolen sometime between 12/31/14 and 1/3/15 in the Love Field area of Dallas.

The collection, which included 10 pounds of ruby, tourmaline, opals, jasper cubes, broken geodes, azurite balls and 50 pounds of emerald rough, was wrapped in white paper towels and stored in gray Rubbermaid totes.

More detail -

"There were at least 16 3-gal silver/gray rubbermaid totes full of specimens and rough. Rough contained at least 50 lbs of emerald, and 3 - 10 lbs each of citrine, rose quartz, amonzonite, amethyst, moonstone,

ruby, sapphire, fluorite and others. Rough was in 1 qt ziplock freezer bags. All other stones/specimens were wrapped in paper towels and most had the original labeling from the vendor I bought them from showing the specimen type, mine it came from, price and vendor info inside the wrapping. This was a loss of at least 1/3 of my collection gathered over the years. Most specimens were not cheap ones, some being rarer stones with values of \$100 - \$450.

Any help is appreciated. We have a report filed with the Dallas Police dept, but they are saying it's doubtful that they will be able to produce any results."

If you have any info please contact Lisa Botell ([469-279-6009](tel:469-279-6009)) or Denise Dodge ([denise\\_dodge@hotmail.com](mailto:denise_dodge@hotmail.com) , [214-680-9103](tel:214-680-9103))

## Blue Amber

*from Wikipedia*

**Blue amber** is amber exhibiting a rare coloration. It is most commonly found in the amber mines in the mountain ranges around Santiago, Dominican Republic, but also in the eastern parts of the Dominican Republic (Although little-known due to its rarity, it has been around since the discovery of Dominican amber).

### Causes of coloration

When natural light strikes blue amber on a white surface, the light passes right through, and is refracted by the white surface. The result is the slight blue hue of blue amber. When the same natural light strikes the amber

on a black surface, the light is not refracted by the black surface, but by the actual amber. Hydrocarbons in the blue amber shift the sun's ultraviolet light down in frequency, resulting in the glow of blue amber.<sup>[4]</sup>



photo by Iskandarmato

*Sunlight's effect on blue amber against a black surface.*

This effect is only possible in some specimens of Dominican amber category, in some Mexican ambers from Chiapas and some ambers from Indonesia. Any other Amber (such as Baltic Amber) will not display this phenomenon, because its original resin is not from the *Hymenaea protera* tree.

The polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, produced through a pyrolytic process that is initiated via irradiation, relax to their ground state, absorb high-energy ultraviolet photons and re-emit them as lower-energy visible photons, according to the absorbance curve of the particular fluorophore.

Recently, optical absorption, fluorescence and time-resolved fluorescence measurements in Dominican ambers have been reported. These studies show that the "blue" variety reveals an intense fluorescence emission in the visible wavelength region, between 430 and 530 nm, with spectral features typical

of aromatic hydrocarbons. On the contrary, the Dominican “red” and “yellow” amber varieties have a much weaker and featureless emission, although still do have a certain fluorescence. The process in blue amber is surprisingly similar to phosphor.

Although there are several theories about the origin of Dominican blue amber, there is a great probability that it owes its existence to ingredients such as [anthracene](#) as a result of ‘incomplete combustion’ due to forest fires among the extinct tree species [Hymenaea protera](#) about 25 to 40 million years ago. Vittorio Bellani and Enrico Giolotto at the University of Pavia, Italy studied several amber specimens by means of optical absorption, fluorescence spectroscopy, and time-resolved fluorescence measurements. The resulting spectral analysis revealed that the spectra of the hydrocarbons are very similar in shape to those of diluted solutions of [anthracene](#), [perylene](#), and [tetracene](#), and suggest that the fluorescent hydrocarbon responsible for the blueness is most likely [perylene](#).

Blue amber emits a very agreeable smell (aromatic molecules), which is different from regular amber when it is being cut and polished.

### Age

According to Poinar, Dominican amber dates from Oligocene to Miocene, thus about 25 million years old. The oldest, and hardest of this amber comes from the mountain region north of Santiago.

### Mining

There are three main sites in the Dominican Republic where amber is found: *La Cordillera*

*Septentrional*, in the north (the Palo Quemado mine, where most of the blue amber is found, is in this area) and *Bayaguana* and *Sabana de la Mar*, in the east.

Dominican amber, especially Dominican blue amber, is mined through bell pitting, which is extremely dangerous. The bell pit is basically a foxhole dug with whatever tools are available. Machetes do the start, some shovels, picks and hammers may participate eventually. The pit itself goes as deep as possible or safe, sometimes vertical, sometimes horizontal, but never level. It snakes into hill sides, drops away, joins up with others, goes straight up and pops out elsewhere. ‘Foxhole’ applies indeed: rarely are the pits large enough to stand in, and then only at the entrance. Miners crawl around on their knees using short-handled picks, shovels and machetes.

There are little to no safety measures. A pillar or so may hold back the ceiling from time to time but only if the area has previously collapsed. Candles are the only source of light. Humidity inside the mines is at 100%. Since the holes are situated high on mountainsides and deep inside said mountains, the temperature is cool and bearable, but after several hours the air becomes stale. During rain the mines are forced to close. The holes fill up quickly with water, and there is little point in pumping it out again (although sometimes this is done) because the unsecured walls may crumble.

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## The Stone Chipper

January 2015 Newsletter

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### Address Correction Requested Austin Gem and Mineral Society



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