



SOUTHWEST GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



February 9, 2024

Next Meeting: Thursday February 15, 2024

Location: San Antonio Garden Center

**3310 N. New Braunfels Avenue
(corner of Funston Place & New Braunfels Ave)
San Antonio TX 78209**

**Time: 6:30 PM Social
7:00 PM Meeting Begins**

Club Website: www.swgms.org

Upcoming Shows and Events

Feb. 17-18 Georgetown, Texas: Annual show; Williamson County Gem & Mineral Society; San Gabriel Park Community Center, 445 East Morrow St; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; Adult 13+ \$3, Kids 6 to 12 \$2, Children under 6 free; contact Kenneth Oliver, (281) 381-0781; Email: wcgmsgemboree@gmail.com; Website: wcgms.org

Feb 24 -25 Pasadena Texas: Clear Lake Gem and Mineral Club Show Pasadena Convention Center 7902 Fairmont Parkway, Pasadena Tx

March 16-17 Abilene, Texas Central Texas Gem and Mineral Society Show Taylor County Expo Center Sat. 9-6 Sun. 10-4 - Display Building 1700 HWY 36 Taylor County Expo Center - Display Building Abilene, TX 79602

APRIL 6 & 7, 2024 SWGMS Fiesta of Gems Show, Morris Center @ Joe Freeman. We now have a lead person(s) for the Lucky Wheel. Thank you Vic & Cynthia Gonzales for taking on this role. If you are interested in volunteering to help out in any capacity, please contact the show chair - Kitty Swoboda at kitty.swgms@gmail.com or at 210-651-6111. Susan Noonan also needs volunteers for the show. Help is needed for the Club Booth, Entry Area, Lucky Wheel, Kids Touch Table, Auction Table, Display Cases, and Silent Auction. Volunteer slots are available for 2 hour shifts morning, mid-day, and afternoon. Contact Susan to sign up on her email susan.noonan@gmail.com All volunteers get into the show free!

Upcoming Events continued

WONDERLAND OF THE AMERICAS™
LOCATED AT I-10 AND LOOP 410 ON FREDERICKSBURG RD


**ROCK, GEM &
JEWELRY SHOW**
IN SAN ANTONIO

MAY 11-12 & SEPTEMBER 7-8, 2024 | 10AM-5PM

COME SEE AND BUY

- *ROCKS
- *GEMSTONES
- *CRYSTALS
- *JEWELRY
- *BEADS
- *LAPIDARY MATERIALS
& MORE!

**FOR SHOW INFO:
(210)596-1611**



FREE ADMISSION! FREE PARKING!
BROUGHT TO YOU BY: SOUTHWEST GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY
& WONDERLAND OF THE AMERICAS
WWW.SWGM.S.ORG

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Many thanks to John Eyre for kicking off our 2024 year with a great presentation on the many ways gemstones have been made affordable over the years and yes, this has included some interesting substitutes, fakes, and more.

A couple of us (maybe more) have been to Tucson for the gem show(s). We have some new stones and crystals to add to our monthly raffles and for the silent auction. Lots to look forward to!

The Tucson show is a little less spread out than it has been in the past but there is still tons to see, and I'll be leaving Tucson without having gone to all of the gem and fossil shows. The usual wide variety of show pieces, mineral art (citrine tree), specimens, fossils (including whole skeletons), and cathedrals were on display. One bit of good news for us as collectors is that some prices are coming back down. Nice galena crystals were readily available again for the first time in about four years. Yes, I nabbed a couple of flats for SWGMS. Prices were also down enough that I was able to get us some of the Thulite specimens from a 2019 find. They are a really pretty shade of pink. My six-day hunt for rocks and minerals has been fun and now it's time to head home. The second-to last evening in Tucson provided this beautiful sunset as seen up in Gates Pass.

Cheers!

Joann



Driving to and from Tucson in late January and early February can be interesting in many ways. Weather is highly variable and my family jokes about having headwinds and/or cross winds driving west AND the return east. For the duration of the Tucson shows, I always go prepared for everything from rain and freezing temperatures to sunny and toasty. This trip added a new 'beware of' to my list. Beware of Sandstorms! Every time I've driven the route, I've laughed at (but paid attention to) the sandstorm warning signs in New Mexico. This time I drove through sandstorms both in New Mexico AND Texas on the way home. The one in New Mexico (2 February) could be seen starting to form miles ahead of me. It started out looking like smoke from a fire. As I got closer, it was obvious it was sand being lifted up by the in-draft of a thunderstorm that was forming. Sorry, no photos of that storm. I think my Mom was distracted by the 4-ft diameter tumble weeds that were blowing across I-10. We broke through the storm and made it to our hotel in Deming all of 20 minutes ahead of it 'hitting'.

Now, that should have been enough excitement for one trip. The weather, however, had other ideas. The drive from Deming to El Paso was uneventful and the tail wind (yay) was appreciated. Stopping for a late breakfast just east of El Paso proved to have been a bad idea. By the time we left the restaurant, the wind was blowing drifts of sand as if it was snow. Within another hour, we were in another sandstorm that was much larger than the prior day. No thunderstorms anywhere and very few clouds in the sky. The storm didn't look like much from the inside, but this time Mom caught a photo of the edge before we 'went in'. It took 40 minutes of driving at 75mph to get out of the storm area. I stopped in Fort Stockton to fuel up, have lunch, and take a break from driving. Mom checked the weather and found that winds were a sustained 48 mph with gusts to 60 mph. Needless to say, we didn't stay long. Getting back to the Texas hill country was a huge relief. Far less windy and much easier driving.

For those of you who are considering driving to Tucson for the shows - take this experience into consideration. Drought conditions and continued land use practices make it more likely to happen again.

Southwest Gem and Mineral Society **January 18, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

By Kurt Menking

The January meeting was held at the San Antonio Botanical Garden Center. The meeting started at 7:00 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance by Don Kolle. Don then welcomed new or visiting attendees including Steven & Beverly, Cesar, Wanda, Jackie, Curtis, and Scott.

Joann Socash, our club president arrived and took over the duty of leading the meeting. She announced that the February meeting will be on the 15th. The program will be presented by Lonnie French on "North Texas Fossils".

Joann also provided the following meeting dates: March 21 – show and tell / prep silent auction boxes for show. The April 18 and May 16 meetings – program TBD

Kitty Swoboda provided updates regarding our Fiesta of Gems & Minerals show which will be on April 6-7 at the Freeman Coliseum Morris Center. She explained that we have 26 vendor spaces rented, tables, chairs, etc. are ordered, and vendor fees collected are about \$10,600. The remaining balance of about \$6K will be due by end of Feb. She asked if there were any additional designs for our G&M show medal, and hearing no replies, she then made a motion to accept the existing design which she passed around. The motion was seconded and approved by a unanimous vote.

Kitty also announced that flyers had been printed and asked for members to distribute them. She explained that the street name where the Fiesta of Gems is being held has changed to Frost Bank Center Dr. so the future flyers and advertisements would include both the old and the new address to minimize confusion.

Kitty also announced that if you haven't picked up your name tag, she may have it with the T-shirts. She reminded everyone that if you don't have a name tag and would like one please let her know and we'll have one made for \$7. New name tags should be available at the March 21 meeting.

Joann Socash then said the mailers that we typically send out announcing the Fiesta of Gems show will be printed soon and will be mailed in mid-February.

Joann also discussed that the club is replacing our 30+ year old display cabinets with 14 new easier to assemble, and nicer looking versions, and that they will be available for our April show.

Susan Noonan then announced her "Call for Volunteers" for the Fiesta of Gems show. We need volunteers for the Club Booth, Entry Area, Lucky Wheel, Kids Touch Table, Auction Table, Display Cases, and Silent Auction. Thursday and Friday April 4-5 will be set up days, and April 6-7 will be helping customers. Volunteer slots are available for morning, mid-day, and afternoon. Get with Susan to sign up on her email susan.noonan@gmail.com

John Speck then talked about the upcoming 2024 Wonderland Shows. He explained that he has 24 club members signed up to sell their goods for the May 11-12, and September 7-8 shows.

January 18, 2024 Meeting Minutes continued

John also talked about how the past events have not been “official” club sponsored events, and he asked if this years and future events could be official club sponsored events. No one had any issues with that, so Joann Socash made a motion to make all future “Wonderland Rock, Gem, & Jewelry Shows” an official sponsored SWGMS event. Motion was seconded by Bill Larson, and carried with a unanimous vote.

John then announced that the City of Balcones Heights plans to enforce in 2024 a long standing ordinance that all vendors selling goods in Balcones Heights must have an event permit. All vendors must obtain sales permits from the Balcones Heights city hall for \$50 for 3 days (one weekend) or \$75 for 7 days (good for both weekends). John will email all vendors with more info after the February Council meeting at Balcones Heights.

Joann Socash announced an upcoming rock hunt to the House Ranch (near Three Rivers) on March 16. The trip will be led by the Dallas Gem and Mineral Society, but we are invited to join them. A \$25 fee is paid to the House family for all adults, but kids are free. The House ranch is a great place to load up on Petrified wood and occasional agates.

Joann also announced that several members are dealing with health issues and asked that we keep them in our thoughts and prayers.

She also announced that this weekend Jan 20-21 is the Fredericksburg Rock Show.

After the meeting was adjourned the raffle for assorted minerals was conducted. Thanks to everyone who participated.

Thank you to Kurt Menking for taking the minutes for this meeting!

Pictures from the Fredericksburg Show



Chrysocolla, malachite and drusy quartz



Barbara Fowler



Sam Rodgers

ROCKHOUNDING TRIP CHECKLIST

By Dick Vogt

The following is a list of items that I've developed and added to over many years and many rockhounding trips. It's a "Living" list in that I keep refining it and you will probably add items to it as you go on more and more hunts and visit different locations.

- Wide-brimmed hat and durable gloves
- Bug spray and sunscreen
- First-Aid kit with tweezers
- Water spray bottles, water for drinking, and extra water for drinking and to refill spray bottles. I usually carry an extra 2-5 gallons with me in my vehicle. The spray bottles are used to clean off any surface dirt/mud on the rocks which helps to reveal any colors which may be present.
- Rock hammers, picks, pry bars, cold chisels, small sledge hammer, shovel and pick axe. A long heavy pry bar is useful for prying out big rocks. I recommend wearing a pair of safety glasses if you're going to be chiseling out material.
- Five gallon plastic buckets (Lowe's/Home Depot) to carry the rocks home in. You can never have too many buckets! I like to carry a canvas tote bag and backpack when collecting. You can find these bags on Amazon. Look for them under canvas water carriers. I cut a round piece of 1/4 inch plywood to fit in the bottom of the buckets or canvas bags to make them last longer.
- Small vials like plastic coin holders or old pill bottles for small specimens.
- Wrapping material such a newspaper or bubble wrap for fragile specimens.
- Hard hats, high-visibility safety vests, steel toed shoes and safety glasses for certain locations.
- Sifting screens, hardware cloth (1/4 and 1/2 inch openings) for certain locations

Other handy items include sitting or knee pads, jewelry loop, UV light (long and short wave), rock identification book, or rock identification app for your smart phone, binoculars, GPS, Walkie-Talkies and site maps.

And "Just in Case": a flashlight, granola bars, emergency space blankets, signaling mirror, a whistle and a Bic lighter. I like a small, but bright, LED flashlight with multi-brightness, strobe flasher and SOS flasher capabilities. These "Just in Case" items only weigh about a pound but could save your life.

HAPPY HUNTING!!!

Editor's note: I would like to thank Dick who is a veteran rockhound and who has many years of experience in collecting for sharing his expertise.

SWGMS Rock Hunt to West Texas

By Chris Cooley

Weekend of December 2-3, 2023

We had a fantastic trip to the Kokernot '06 Ranch, a 109,000 acre ranch between Alpine, Fort Davis, and Balmorhea. Our hosts, James Winn Vi, and Aaron Thomas allowed us to hunt two newly discovered sites, and boy, did that pay off! It never ceases to amaze me how many beautiful varieties of agates and Jaspers are on this property.

We had around 35 folks on Saturday and 16 on the Sunday hunt. I did not hear of anyone leaving there disappointed with their beautiful finds. If we have interested folks who want to go together as a group again, we may make this an annual event.

I encourage any of you who attended the hunt to share your experience with others in the group and bring some of your treasures to the March meeting for Show and Tell.

- Chris Cooley, Rock Hunt Chair

Below are some of the specimens collected on this trip.





Thanks to Chris for the great article and photos! He is the winner of this month's Geology Photo Contest and will receive a Serpentine specimen!

Editors note:

Thanks to the members who contributed ideas for our newsletter! We will continue to feature a “Geology Photo of the Month” contest. Contributors are asked to email me their submissions and photos before March 10 if you want them to appear in the March newsletter. Winners will receive the adulation of their peers and a rock specimen from me. You can send submissions to jbpdeluna@aol.com.

The newsletter depends on you for information, trip reports and articles! Please send your suggestions, articles, and photos to me at jbpdeluna@aol.com

Southwest Gem and Mineral Society Information

The Southwest Gem and Mineral Society is a non-profit organization devoted to promoting interest in, knowledge about, and education in the Earth Sciences. We are a member of the American Federation of Minerology Society. Membership is open to anyone interested in joining. Dues are \$5.00 for 17 and under, \$10.00 for adults, and \$15.00 for family memberships. For membership information please contact Linda at lsswgms22@gmail.com

Each year we sponsor the “Fiesta of Gems Rock and Mineral Show” in April at the Morris Activity Center located on the grounds of the Joe Freeman Coliseum. This event features numerous vendors and displays. Monies raised during this event are used to fund scholarships in the Earth Sciences for students at area universities such as the University of Texas at San Antonio, St. Mary’s University, and Trinity University. The club also presents cash awards to the winners of High School Science Fairs for projects relating to the Earth Sciences. We also sponsor the “Rock, Gem, and Jewelry Show “at the Wonderland of the Americas Mall in September and May.

Our meetings are every third Thursday at the San Antonio Garden Center which is located at 3310 N. New Braunfels Ave San Antonio. We start with a social and a show and tell at 6:30 PM and the formal meeting starts at 7:00 PM.



We also have club field trips and rock hunts throughout the year for our members (weather permitting).

Our website is located on Facebook at Southwest Gem and Mineral Society San Antonio

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Web site for Southwest Gem & Mineral Society www.swgms.org