



# **SOUTHWEST GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER**



**Volume 65...January 8, 2024**

**Next Meeting: Thursday January 18, 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**

**Club Website: [www.swgms.org](http://www.swgms.org)**

## **Upcoming Shows and Events**

**Jan. 18 SWGMS Meeting** John Eyre will present a program on "Gemstones - Man-made & Assembled." Topics covered will include Doublets, Triplets, Synthetics, and Fakes.

**Jan. 20-21—FREDERICKSBURG, TEXAS:** Annual show; Fredericksburg Rockhounds; Ladybird Johnson Park (Pioneer Pavilion), Hwy 16 South; Sat. 9-6, Sun. 10-4; Free Admission; Free door prizes, Hourly silent auction, Outstanding raffle prizes. We have dealers from throughout the Southwest and demonstrations of rock cutting and polishing. We also have a club geologist to help identify your "mystery rocks"; contact Frank Rowell, (325) 248-1067; Email: [hcgms20@gmail.com](mailto:hcgms20@gmail.com); Website: [fredericksburgrockhounds.org](http://fredericksburgrockhounds.org)

**Jan. 26-28—TYLER, TEXAS:** Annual show; East Texas Gem & Mineral Society; Tyler Rose Garden Center, 420 Rose Park Drive; Fri. 9-5, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; Adults \$7, Students \$3, Children 6 and under free; Dealers, Rock Food Table, Florescent Mineral Display, Kids Games, Silent Auction on Saturday and Sunday, Displays and demos; contact Jerry Suddeth, (903) 787-2088; Email: [suddethjerry13@gmail.com](mailto:suddethjerry13@gmail.com); Website: [www.ETGMS.org](http://www.ETGMS.org)

**Feb. 7 Larremore Ranch Hunts:** The spring schedule for Larremore Ranch Hunts has been announced. Hunts will be scheduled for every other Wednesday beginning February 7<sup>th</sup> and every Saturday. Trips will be led by Brian and Jean Larremore. Rocks you can expect to find include all colors of jasper, picture chert all colors, agate all colors, jaspagate, some clam or oyster fossils mostly limestone, some agatized, petrified wood mostly agatized. Terri Smith will be publishing her schedule at a later date when she returns to Texas. If you are interested in hunting this ranch please email or PM [jeanlarremore@yahoo.com](mailto:jeanlarremore@yahoo.com) Any interested party must email or PM me on Facebook at least a week in advance. You can contact Terri Smith at [teri@terismithrockhunts.com](mailto:teri@terismithrockhunts.com) or [agatehunter@sbcglobal.net](mailto:agatehunter@sbcglobal.net).

**Larremore Ranch Hunts continued.** All people are expected to sign a release of liability upon entering the ranch. The price is \$60.00 per person per 5 gallon bucket, children 9 and under are free.

There are numerous Airbnb's, motels and hotels in Alpine, Terlingua, Marathon, Ft Davis, and Marfa, and dry camping arranged by our son on our north ranch. Stargazers' heaven!

**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](mailto:wcgmsgemboree@gmail.com); Website: [wcgms.org](http://wcgms.org)

**APRIL 6 & 7, 2024 SWGMS Fiesta of Gems Show,** Morris Center @ Joe Freeman. We are still in need of a lead person for the Lucky Wheel. This would involve coordinating volunteer shifts during the show, set up and tear down of the booth, and final inventory at the closing of the show.

This year we are planning on designing another Fiesta Medal, so we need designs and artwork. Anyone interested in submitting a design for the medal is encouraged to do so. All entries need to be in by the January 2024 meeting where we will vote on the best entries. If you are interested in volunteering for any of the above mentioned requests, please contact the show chair - Kitty Swoboda at [kitty.swgms@gmail.com](mailto:kitty.swgms@gmail.com) or at 210-651-6111.

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## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

I hope everyone had a festive and safe holiday season. We had a good turn-out at the holiday gathering on 14 December with a few lucky participants winning T-shirts or gift cards. Several of our Board and members were not able to join in at the holiday gathering for various reasons. There was one stand-out and that was Chris Cooley. He was diagnosed with cancer and has already started treatments. He is facing one of the toughest fights any of us could face and he is taking it head-on. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers! Now it is time to look forward to the year ahead. 2024 is off to a quick start and there are many exciting things to look forward to in our upcoming meetings. Our very own John Eyre will be leading off our presentation series.

Happy New Year!

Joann

### **Southwest Gem and Mineral Society** **December 14, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

The Christmas meeting at Blanco Barbeque which is located at 13259 Blanco Road was called to order at 7:07 pm by President Joann Socash. Joann thanked everyone for attending. She announced that our show for 2024 had been locked in and thanked Kitty for getting it set up. Fliers for our annual show will be coming out soon and Starbucks may be willing to put up fliers.

John Eyre will be presenting the program for the January meeting.

Joann also said she was working on field trips for the coming year.

Club emails are now coming out with the ID of SWGMS.

She announced Joann DeLuna is putting out the fabulous newsletter and would appreciate your contributions.

John Speck announced he has plenty of fliers for the upcoming mall shows. Just contact him if you need more.

Kitty said she is working on the display cases and they should be done soon. She also said someone is needed to be on camera for television for the annual show advertising. The Public Relations volunteer will approach radio and television stations to place advertising.

Joann said Facebook is hard to work with. The primary problem is that the person who owns our Facebook account is no longer active in the club and will not give up the account. Joann has gained authority to add administrators. Kitty has volunteered her Facebook link. It can be found on Facebook at SWGMS San Antonio. That should be available in January 2024. Members will receive an email requesting them to join the new Facebook page.

Linda Simpson announced if you haven't renewed your membership for 2024, now is the time to do so.

Joann Socash asked attendees to bring their canned food donations to the collection table.

**Minutes continued.**

A drawing was held and the following members won prizes:

Kim Parks – Club T Shirt, Joann Socash – Club T Shirt, Ed Buchanan – Club T Shirt

Don Kolle - \$50.00 gift card from Olive Garden, Aurora Buchanan - \$50.00 gift card from Olive Garden, Cynthia Gonzales – \$50.00 gift card from Olive Garden and Rhonda Hilla - \$50.00 gift card from Olive Garden

41 members and 3 guests attended the meeting. We took in \$370.00 in membership dues and a \$5.00 donation.

**Thanks to Jerrold Simpson for taking the Minutes for the December Meeting.**

**Thanks to Joann Socash for the Photos of our club Christmas Party.**



## **MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR**

As many of you may have heard, one of our members Chris Cooley is presently in the hospital fighting an aggressive form of non-Hodgkins lymphoma. He has begun treatment but cannot have visitors for now. We need to show him that we support him by sending Chris get well cards and messages at:

Methodist Hospital

Attn: Chris Cooley, Rm 877 Oncology Floor

7700 Floyd Curl Drive

San Antonio, TX 78229

Thanks to the members who contributed ideas for our newsletter! We will continue to feature a “Geology Photo of the Month” contest. Interested members are asked to email me their most interesting Geology related photos. Winners will receive the adulation of their peers and a rock specimen from me. You can send submissions to [jbpdeluna@aol.com](mailto:jbpdeluna@aol.com).

This month’s entry for the **Geology Photo of the Month** comes from Notafed.

Pictured are photos of a trip to Alpine Texas and the Kokernot 06 Ranch



Photos by Notafed



Photo by Notafed

## **Trip Report**

At the beginning of December, we embarked on a road trip across west Texas, to explore the historical private ranch known as the Kokernot 06, reputed to be the home of vast landscapes, wide open ranges and lots of quartz, jasper and agates.

The drive out to our base city of Alpine took us through some charming small towns, with the cities getting smaller and smaller as we worked our way there. My favorites were the tiny little towns that could properly be called “outposts”. They were little more than a gas station and a convenience store sometimes, but everyone was friendly and the cashiers were heard telling their customers “say hi to your mom for me” while ringing up their purchases. The terrain is mostly flatish, but there are some hills, and the highways cut through the hills, revealing the hidden geology like layers of a fancy cake.

We passed hillsides dotted with scrub brush- creosote bush and occasional yuccas and agaves as we headed out into the vast Chihuahuan Desert

Up early the first day, we met our guide Aaron in Alpine, about a 3 minute drive from our motel. He brought examples to show us the various rocks to be found on the ranch, and then had us form into a convoy to follow him to the ranch. The drive through the ranch revealed up close views of miles of ridge lines and mountain peaks. Each curve in the road brought us to a different area with different topography and geology. A drive full of excitement, (a little dust), wonder and expectations of what would come next. It felt like we were in an episode of Expedition Unknown!

## **Trip Report continued:**

Our spot for this day was a ridge maybe 100 feet high and about a half mile long. Hillsides were steep, but there was promising looking ground everywhere. Some started on the flat areas at the base of the hill, while the more adventurous walked/hiked/clamored up the hill and spread out to work their own personal 'gem and mineral claims'.

You could hear the sound of rocks hitting the bottom of 5 gallon buckets, so it didn't take long for the finds to start showing up.

The area is volcanic, so we had a lot of basalt boulders and outcroppings, proving that even though it looked a little plain at first, it would take a week just to work this one ridge! Aaron told us to pay attention to the 'washes' or drainage areas, and to also look for an A, B and C locations that would roughly equate to contour lines on a topo map.

We ended up with an amazing assortment of quartz with gleaming points, there was also a good amount of bright red and yellow jasper, and chalcedony- including some with a soft blue hue and agates up to 10-15 pounds, some with awesome botryoidal patches on the outside!

On the second day, Aaron took us to a more remote part of the sprawling ranch- almost an hour drive through the ranch. Wonderful morning watching the sun coming up over the ridges while enjoying a good cup of coffee... We worked a hillside during the morning, and then with the promise of "more color over there", we relocated to a distant ridge that was even higher. This put us at the top of the draws and washes. We fanned out and headed downhill, deeper into the small valleys with our buckets and rock fever.

The terrain was sloping downhill, "over'd with dead tan grass that looked smooth, but actually hid the rough basalt terrain with plenty of basketball sized rocks that could make walking or even taking a step challenging at times. A little further down, we could see the other endless small ridges, spread like fingers, that all dumped into a large box canyon at the base of the valleys. In these valleys, we discovered beautiful seam agates, bare red stone ledges that looked like someone had scattered handfuls of quartz nodules and silver dollar size wafers of chalcedony and AGATES... more agates than it's possible to carry. It was easy to load up a full bucket or two, but once you started back uphill with your precious payload, you had to make some choices about how committed you were to getting the rocks back. Some stayed committed and trudged on, pausing to rest occasionally, and some stopped and started to cull their rocks en route.

\*(The author reevaluated his attachment to approximately 30% of the findings, after factoring in the weight and the higher altitude at a bit over 5,000 above sea level. Despite fierce negations and solemn oaths to NOT pick up any more specimens on the hike back to the trucks, new rocks still found their way into the bucket somehow. It's still a mystery of science.)

Back at the trucks, we prepared to leave, when one of the members found not one, but 2, really nice 10+ pound agates in the middle of the jeep trail. A great ending to a great day rockhounding on the Kokernot o6 ranch.

## **Trip Report continued:**

This was really a once in a lifetime trip to a huge private ranch that truly is still the wild west.

Epilogue: Many of these rocks have gone on to lead happy lives as beautiful, shiny slab examples of West Texas agates of the moss and plum varieties.

Rocky Hunter

Editors Note: **Thank you** to Rocky Hunter for great photos and an excellent trip report! Members contributions are a big part of a newsletter and I really appreciate him sharing his pix and great report. Member submissions and photos are critical to making our newsletter interesting. If you have items of interest please send them to [jbpdeluna@aol.com](mailto:jbpdeluna@aol.com).

## **Club News!**

Our NEW Facebook group is up and running! Our new site is very similar to the old site so please update your Facebook to our new name - Southwest Gem & Mineral Society San Antonio The public area is open to everyone to provide information and club meetings and events. The group invitation will give you access to the interactive Facebook area for club members.

Please click on the link below, answer the group questions and join our new club hub online! We are currently setting up the group so you can share events that the group may be interested in, chat and share all things gem and mineral related! We are even looking at a future swap shop & market for club members. We look forward to you joining us on our new online group! <https://www.facebook.com/groups/swgms/>



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**Web site for Southwest Gem & Mineral Society [www.swgms.org](http://www.swgms.org)  
We are also on Facebook!**