

SOUTHWEST GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

Volume 51 No. 8.....August, 2010

P O BOX 17323, San Antonio, Texas 78217-0323

Our Website: www.swgemandmineral.org

TEMPORARILY meetings will be held the **second THURSDAY** of the month, except in October and December. Board meetings are usually held the second Monday after the general meeting.

TEMPORARILY

GENERAL MEETING: August 12, 2010

TIME: 6:15 pm – 8:00 pm

NEW TRIAL MEETING PLACE

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
1018 E. GRAYSON STREET
SAN ANTONIO, TX

DIRECTIONS: (traveling south on IH35)
Exit #159A, turn Right at N New Braunfels Ave.,
Continue on to E Grayson St and address will be on the Left.
Entrance will be through door marked OFFICE.

REFRESHMENT HOSTS/HOSTESSES FOR THE
MONTH OF AUGUST

Bob & Brenda Schultz Harrison & Jennifer Schumann
Bill & Kathy Siebold Wade Smith John Speck
Deborah Strole Henry Stonecipher David Stough

HEALTH Updates of our Members

There are a number of our members that have been and are still under the weather. We need to keep these folks in our thoughts and prayers.

If you have any updates on members, please contact Gail Hyatt at 210-658-5876, so that we may share info with other members.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This summer is passing fast again. I will be out in Creede, Colorado attending the gem and mineral show which is the first weekend in August. I heard comments that the new venue we were able to use for the July meeting was very nice and suited our meeting. I understand that we have been allowed a three month trial. After the three months our Board and the Church will make a decision concerning our continued use of the room for our future meetings. Please pass your comments concerning this facility to our Board Members.

Hope you are all having a great summer!

BOB BOWIE

Minutes of the JULY Meeting

Sam Rogers called our meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:05. Members gathered for this month's meeting in a new facility. St. Paul's Episcopal Church is located near Ft Sam Houston base. This is a beautiful Church and we were privileged to be allowed to meet here.

Jim Meloche presented the program for this month, The Art of Gem Cutting, Volume 1. For new folks to this art, the film was facinating to watch the faceting!!! The film was quite long, but interesting non the less. For experienced faceters, the opportunity to watch someone else work was probably interesting, comparing their own ways to the film...The film began with showing of a piece of rough quartz. The equipment that was used was explained in detail as to what, how and why. By the end of the film, a beautifully faceted stone was presented. This film had our audience quiet and totally engrossed. If you have ever wondered how stones are faceted, this would be a great film to check out.

The film was presented on new film equipment purchased by the approval of our Board of Directors. We no longer will have to struggle through meetings using someone else's equipment and not being sure how it is operated. Jim did a great job on setting it up and running it for the first time....WAY TO GO JIM!!!

Even though we were in a different place, we still had our auction. Some really terrific specimen were on hand. Thanks to all members that participated.

We adjourned about 9:00. A good time was had by all!

Gail Hyatt, Secretary

MINI CLASSIFIEDS

Ultra Tee Faceting unit, variable speed cw/ccw, with light tools and drip post. (needs new riostat) \$500.00

Call D. Peterson 830-627-8200

Gail Hyatt is looking for canning jars....if you have some to spare, please bring them to the coming meeting...

If you have anything to sell, trade or get rid of, contact Gail Hyatt.

COMING SOON

***Arlington Gem and Mineral Club 53rd Annual Show
Texas Treasures***

September 4, 2010 10am – 6pm

September 5, 2010 10am – 5pm

Arlington Convention Center, 1200 Ballpark Way, Arlington, Tx 76011

57th Annual Houston Gem and Mineral Society

Gem & Mineral Show

November 12-14, 2010

Humble Civic Center

Black Hawk Encounter

By Joe Noonan

One weekend in November Susan and I visited Black Hawk, Colorado, an old gold mining town about 50 miles from Denver. The occasion was her mother's 75th birthday. She doesn't live there.

Black Hawk is still a mining town, but the main attraction is casino gambling, and Susan's mother is not a mining enthusiast. The gambling came in after Colorado passed a law that allows gambling in any town established before 1880 which allowed gambling at that time. It is a picturesque place well worth a visit, except perhaps in winter. I'm sure it is pretty; but it's also darned cold.

Saturday morning we decided to walk into town from our hotel. As we came down the main road we saw a construction zone that appeared to block the way. We stopped and looked around for another way when a man walking by stopped and offered directions. He introduced himself as Chet.

Chet listened to our dilemma and then began a talk on the bus route we could take, where it stopped and brief histories of points of interest along the bus route. He was an absolute trove of information and his presentation was so delightful it would have teared the eyes of the Chamber of Commerce. He had lived there for about 20 years and worked at one of the mines.

The conversation turned to the mines themselves. The area around Black Hawk is known as the richest square mile on earth because of the gold reserves it holds. The gold is locked up in a pyrite amalgam that assays at 18 try ounces of gold and 32 ounces of silver per tone of ore. It is 6 percent copper. It is extremely rich but also extremely expensive ore to process. The current price of gold isn't quite high enough to make mining profitable. Most of the expense involves the environmental safeguards required to mine the ore and extract the metals. At that time gold was trading at about \$830.00 per ounce.

By then Chet's bus was due. He told us the sidewalks were open and we should have no problem walking the rest of the way to the casino.

I asked if there was a rock shop in town that would have local mineral specimens. His expression was priceless as he uttered those famous words, "If only I had met you yesterday!". He then explained that he had a rather large number of specimens from the mines, but had offered to give them to a local merchant because he would be moving soon and didn't have room for them.

He asked if we were staying in town because he'd be happy to bring a few specimens to me. I answered that we were leaving soon for home. (As I write this I just now got what he meant.) Anyway, we parted company then and Susan and I continued our walk downtown.

Later that afternoon Susan and I were walking back to the hotel when we ran into Chet again. He was working on a car and happened to look up just as we approached.

“I thought you were going back to San Antonio!” he said.

“Oh, that’s not until Monday,” I replied.

“That makes things different,” he said.

“I was planning to give my friend those rocks tomorrow afternoon, but if you meet me here at 7:15 in the morning, I’ll have some pieces here and you can have your pick.”

We said we’d try to make it, but couldn’t promise anything since we didn’t know what plans had been made for the morning. Chet said he’d be there anyway.

I was kind of excited about the next morning. It was a little early, but we could do it. Then my brain started spinning. It was early. Wouldn’t it be dark then? No one is up and around on Sunday morning. What if he wants to rob me? There would be no witnesses. I could be killed on the cold dark streets of Black Hawk. He did say he and the police didn’t get along. He was leaving town. He’d need money. He could be playing me for a sucker. He could also be genuine. Why would he do this for a complete stranger?

Come Sunday morning, curiosity (greed) won over. I told Susan I’d go alone. She thought I was being ridiculous and said she was coming too. At 7:15 the sky was already a bright blue. We drove down to the lot where Chet’s car was parked. Just in case, I parked a short distance away, facing out toward the street. I left Susan in the car with instructions to get out if anything happened. The engine was running.

Chet and I exchanged pleasantries and then he went to get something from the car. “Oh no, a shotgun!” raced through my brain. “Lord have mercy on me a sinner.” He pulled out a cloth bag. Reaching in, he pulled out a beautiful piece of pyrite. He then laid several pieces out on the car hood.

“Take your pick,” he said, “take all you want. I’m getting rid of all of it today, anyway. These are some pieces I grabbed in the dark this morning.”

I was speechless. He even included an ore sample from a neighboring mine. It was like choosing among your favorite desserts. By then Susan had joined us and was admiring the stones.

I couldn’t decide. Then he opened a bag of smaller pieces; more beautiful stuff. I told him about our club and how we glue small stones into cars and trucks for prizes for kids and also that the show was in March. Chet scooped them up and put them back in the bag. “Take all of them,” he said. “I even brought you an ore bag from the mine.”

And that was that. We met a complete stranger, had a nice conversation, learned a lot about the town we were visiting; we weren't murdered, and were sent home with a bag of specimens from the richest square mile on earth. I have never had such a fortuitous experience in my life. I hope I get a chance to pass it on.

Rock hounds are like this, I believe, and I am proud to be among them!

Website for South West Gem and Mineral Society:

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