

THE VOICE

VOLUME LXII NUMBER 8 September 2011

NEWSLETTER OF THE EL PASO MINERAL AND GEM SOCIETY

P.O. Box 31516, El Paso TX 79931

Membership Dues are due and payable as of December of each year. Dues are \$12.00 for Adults (18 and Over) and \$4.00 for Juniors. Make check out to EPMGS and mail to PO Box 31516 El Paso TX 79931. **Delinquency of over 90 days will result in being removed from the Membership Roster.**

Meetings will be held on the 4th Thursday of every month at The Memorial Senior Center, 1800 Byron, El Paso TX at 6:30 PM. Board Meetings will usually be held a half hour prior to the general meeting

THE VOICE

The Voice is the official bulletin of the Society and is published monthly. All articles must be in the editor's possession no later than the Monday following the monthly meeting. Any articles received after that will not be published until the following month.

E-mail madtex@q.com and mailing address: EPMGS, Editor, PO Box 31516, El Paso TX 79931. Members are encouraged to submit articles for publication. Permission is granted to reprint material from other sources provided that credit is properly cited. Ads are accepted from members for publication at no charge for the sale or exchange of items pertaining to the hobby.

WEBSITE: www.epmgs.com

The El Paso Mineral and Gem Society, Inc. is a non-profit organization. The purpose of this Society shall be to increase and

disseminate knowledge about minerals and other geologic materials; to encourage mineral study, collecting and fashioning as a hobby; to conduct meeting, lectures, displays, field trips, and to sponsor shows for the general edification of the public.

ADDRESS CHANGES

NOTE: Anyone who has a change in mailing address, phone number, etc. please send e-mails to Judy Herd at pyritejudy@sbcglobal.net, or mail to: EPMGS Membership, PO Box 31516, El Paso TX 79931. Thank you.

Tired of black and white pictures? Please provide your email address to the Membership Chair Judy Herd.

General Meeting

Our next general meeting will be **September 22, 2011 at 6:30pm.** There will be a **rock auction** with the benefits going to the society. Please bring an auction item. Last names M-Z please bring a desert.

Secretary Report

Minutes General Meeting El Paso Mineral and Gem Society
8.26.2011
Meeting called to order at 6:30
Guests: Marisa Cameron
Scholarship recipient.
30 people in attendance.
PJ presented Marisa Cameron with a check for \$1500.00 for EPMG 2011 scholarship award.
School Reports given,
Liz asked if there was any old business.
Reports were given on the picnic, it was a success. No minutes were taken for that general meeting but all had fun!!!!

Brief minutes were read to recap and see if there was any old

business.
There was no old business.

Next field trip is scheduled for Sat. the 28th. Of August
Anybody interested was asked to check the EPMG web site.

New Business:
Mike Chrisman brought up the idea of announcing the club and school at Fort Bliss, to bring in more students & members, after discussion

Holly volunteered to contact, through Face-book, Col. Joe Sinolli to explore the possibilities.

Valerie Provencio suggested that the EPMG have a booth at the 17th annual Chihuahuan Festival, it was moved and to have a PR & sales booth with brochures on the school, club & show. It passed unanimously. She announced that they also had free vendors booths for anybody interested.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 followed by snacks and a wire wrapping video presented by Valerie

Provencio

Next meeting snacks will be M-Z

Written by
Secretary Teresa Ziraldo

Field Trip



Our August field trip found us first in Rincon, NM for psilomelane, agate and jasper with many nice finds by the six people in attendance. Valerie Provencio also had her archeologist's goggles on and spotted a circle of stones once used as part of a wikiup. Lots of artifacts are evident in the area, with many nice jasper and agate "cores" left behind as part of past tool-making.

Good pieces of psilomelane were found both in the wash near our parking area and on the hillsides. Though messy to work with, the heavy psilomelane polishes to a lustrous, metallic sheen and makes beautiful cabochons. Reggie suggests spraying your hands first with Pam before making cabochons with psilomelane to avoid having your fingers stained black! If lucky enough to find nice botroidal pieces

they can also make splendid specimens for the mineral collectors among us.

Our scholarship recipient, Marissa, joined us on the trip and was the one to find the largest piece of carnelian - a rarity in the area. A few small pieces of petrified wood were even collected.

The group decided to travel a few miles up I-25 to Hatch, NM for banded rhyolite and more jasper. On the way, a stop was made just north of the Rincon exit on I-25 at a road cut that sports large slabs of selenite. I had often driven past this spot and wondered what made the clay in the cut sparkle and was pleasantly surprised while on a scouting trip with Larry Hager to find the selenite there in such large pieces and abundance.

We then proceeded to one of many washes in the Hatch area that concentrate the banded rhyolite and jasper. Probably everyone would have filled their remaining buckets here, but with the day getting hotter we opted to load up a small haul of nicely-colored pieces and then head out.

Our last stop of the day took us to Sparky's in Hatch where we enjoyed a lunch of barbecue, green

chili cheeseburgers and the oddity of the day - green chili chocolate milkshakes!

Our next trip will be [September 17-19](#) to Mason, TX. I realize that this overlaps with another event, but the timing could not be avoided. We will be visiting the Seaquist Ranch for topaz hunting. Cost is \$15 per day per adult, \$5 for children under 12. I will need to have an approximate head-count to give to the ranch staff a couple of days in advance, so please contact me at scritz@earthlink.net and let me know if you plan to be there.

The Seaquist Ranch does not have facilities on the ranch, so you will need to make arrangements elsewhere for lodging or camping. For those wishing to stay in Mason, check out <http://www.masontxcoc.com/lodging.html> for suggestions as to motels and B&Bs. I have been told that those wishing to camp or park an RV should consider the Ft. Mason City Park RV Camping, which is shaded by pecan trees. For those wanting a more up-scale facility, there is a very nice Best Western hotel in Junction, which is about a 45-minute drive southwest of Mason. I have personally stayed at this hotel in the past and found the facility to be comfortable and the

included hot breakfast to be yummy.

The game plan is to make the drive out on [Friday](#), rest up for a day of topaz hunting on [Saturday](#), get a good night's rest [Saturday](#) evening and then head back home on [Sunday](#). Of course, you may want to adjust your schedule to meet your personal needs but will need to make the rendezvous with the ranch staff on [Saturday](#) for entry into the ranch itself.

I have started a Facebook group for us called El Paso Mineral and Gem Society where you can find photos of our field trips and interact with other Society members as well as share info, etc. It is a closed group, so look it up and make a request to join and you'll be added to the group.

Happy hounding!

-Sue

FROM THE MINE OF THE EDITOR



Agate Rendezvous

Agate Rendezvous 2011 is in the books for this year. Despite the negative beginning, the Springdale Fire, Arizona's largest ever wildfire that consumed 538,000 acres crossed in to Luna, NM that resulted in large tracts of the Gila Forest being closed. To the sad loss of the mother of Agate Rendezvous leader who was then unable to attend, the gathering mood was gloomy. The actual truth was it turned out better than could be imagined.

The actual attendees were 27, coming from Arizona, California, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. Of those 11 were returnees from

past Agate Rendezvous, including our own Sirkka-Liisa who made her 9th visit. New friends were made and old ones were embraced much like the rendezvous' the fur trappers of old in the Canadian wilderness. We swapped tall rock hound tails, rocks, minerals, coffee and wild stories. We gathered around camp fires in Apache Creek camp ground and made planned outings just the same.

Access to the Gila from FR 220 which leads in to the prized Luna gold and blue agate areas was marked with "Fire Hazard No Entry". Violators would be met with citations. The trees around the Luna area and upper San Francisco River were also marked with the same signs. The area had received more rain than I'd seen in in the years past. The earth was reclaiming the burnt growth very quickly; the grass and wild flowers that surrounded the burnt areas were already high. It rained easy and hard every afternoon and evening and the Fire Danger signs were all marked "Low". The No Entry was in case of falling trees and limbs we were told. The ground was saturated all over the area and the

re-opening of the forest was scheduled for Labor Day. For those who know the great ranch of Larry Hendrix that sits next to the turn off to the Luna gold agate fields, his place and valley was spared. Of note, not related to the great wildfire, the hotel in Reserve burnt down last December.

There was still a whole lot of agate to find and forest roads to traverse in other parts of the open Gila forest. We went to Turkey Park, different areas in and around that ridge, FR 49, Shepard's Canyon, and areas that have no name.

Determined rock hounds will find agates. Deep blue agates large and small in all colors in between and crystal masses were found. Apache Tears and Perlite, red agates, jaspers and chalcedony were plentiful. Agates filled every ones buckets. There were no shortages and vehicles groaned under the weight of the rocks.

A wolf and a lion were heard but not seen and tracks found in the Turkey Park area. Deer and Elk herds were seen at dusk, lizards, horned toads and rabbits crossed our path. A Great Barn owl perched above a tree in my camp and hooted

away. The hills were lush and green, creeks were full and running and nature appeared to be on the mends. It was hard to leave and return to the desert and heat but reality called. I am anxious for next year and Agate Rendezvous 2012 when I can do it all over again.



blue agate with crystals



banded with druse quartz

Bench Tips

By Brad Smith,
[facebook.com/BenchTips](https://www.facebook.com/BenchTips)

BALL BURS

I use ball burs quite a bit for carving and for cleaning up bits of solder that need to be removed. Ball burs seem to be more controllable than other cutting burs. They're less apt to grab and walk over your piece leaving nasty scars. And I've found that size matters. The large 8-10 millimeter size is a useful size for carving off bulk material while the small half millimeter or less size can be used at high speed for signing your name on the back of the piece.

CLEANING STEEL SHOT

Steel shot in a vibratory or rotary tumbler works great to burnish up your finished silver pieces. Surfaces are shined and hardened by the shot impinging on it. Carbon steel shot can get rusty and even stainless steel can develop a blackish coating that's hard to remove. My solution of choice to clean the shot is Classic Coke. Just pour an ounce or two over the shot and let the tumbler run for an hour or so. A bad case might require a second cleaning. I'm no chemist, but I've heard that it's the phosphoric acid in Coke that does the trick.

DEBURING A HOLE

When you drill a hole, there's usually a burr produced on the underside of the metal. Typically you would then file or sand this smooth, but doing so will put scratches on your piece that will take time to polish off. A quick way to remove the burr is to grab a drill bit that's about three times as large as your hole. Simply twist it in the hole to cut off the burr. I usually do this by hand but if you have many holes to do, put the drill into a holder like a pin vice.

Tech Tools

I saw several rock hounds this week using a “Bushnell GPS Back Track” personal locator. I had never seen one and was interested in it. What they told me and websites say about it, it’s an extremely basic GPS system. Say when you get out of your vehicle to go in to the woods you mark your location of your vehicle. Then off you go. If you’re like me in the woods, I don’t recognize the last tree from the next. You then press a button and it points you in the direction back to your vehicle displaying direction and distance.

I use a “Garmin GPS map 60CSX” unit because I like more information and interactive control with the device. During Agate Rendezvous 2011, I used the similar system marking my vehicle and using the navigation function to get back to my vehicle. This is not an endorsement of either device. People I talked to said it works great for them. I also know people who have fancy gps systems and have no idea how they work. Bottom line is, know your equipment before you place your wellbeing in it.



Agate Rendezvous Rocks & People
courtesy of Taco Rocks



sample finds & elk antler



red agate/jasper



washing large agate in stream



brown agate w/fortification



Searching for apache tears

multi colored agate



pictographs near Apache Creek

School information

Call 915-562-4268 for information and to enroll in Lapidary and Jewelry-craft classes. The Instructors are volunteers from the school committee of the Society and are not paid in any way by the Society or the students. If you want to enroll in one of the classes, all you have to do is sign up at the Memorial Park Senior Center which is located at 1800 Byron Street, El Paso TX. It is important that you register early because a minimum of three students is needed for a "Go" with a maximum of six students per class. Sign up well in advance as there are usually waiting lists. Each Class has a \$20 fee plus a Lab Fee and any other material costs. The \$20 fee payment is to be made on the first day of the class to the Senior Center, and the Lab Fee will be paid to your instructor. All other material purchases should be paid for at the time of purchase or delivery.

SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

The meetings are all held at noon in the conference room at the Memorial Park Senior Citizens Center. Anybody who wishes to sit in on any of the meetings is welcome. We recommend that you call Rose Strong at the Center first to make sure that the meeting date has not changed. Her number is 915-562-4268.

Wed Jan 26	Tue Feb 22	Mon Mar 21	Tue Apr 19
Wed May 25	Tue Jun 21	Mon Jul 18	Tue Aug 23
Mon Sep 19	Tue Oct 18	Mon Nov 14	Tue Dec 13

.2011 CLUB OFFICERS

President Liz Kosturakis (915)595-1413	Vice President P.J. Schabacker (575)589-5068
Treasurer Riitta Gillespie (915)821-4273	Secretary Teresa Ziraldo (915)526-9445
Historian Marty Gaugler (915)859-6634	Editor Matt Durning (915)491-3244
Field Trips Sue Critz (915)203-4783	Membership Judy Herd (915)821-7818
3 Year Trustee Tom Smith (915)778-5240	2 Year Trustee Miguel Chrisman (915)740-0301
1 Year Trustee Matt Durning	Show Chair Harry Bruntz (915)345-2415

Assist. Show Chair Jeanette Carrillo (915)533-7153 Webmaster Matt Durning

SEPT. 23-25—SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO: Annual show; Palace of the Governors, New Mexico History Museum; Palace of the

Governors courtyard, 113 Lincoln Ave.; Fri. 9-7, Sat. 9-4:30, Sun. 9-4:30; free admission; dealers, specimens, talks, demonstrations, contact Inessa Williams, 113 Lincoln Ave., Santa Fe, NM 87501, (505) 476-5106; e-mail:

inessa.williams@state.nm.us ; Web site: www.nmhistorymuseum.org

OCT. 21-23—AUSTIN, TEXAS: Annual show, "Gold"; Austin Gem & Mineral Society; Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Rd.; Fri. 9-5, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$5, seniors (60 and over) \$4, students (13-18) \$1, children (6-12) 50 cents; more than 30 dealers, jewelry, beads, gemstones, mineral specimens, crystals, fossils, spheres, lapidary equipment, exhibits, "Rock Food" table, touch table, fluorescent minerals, member collections, silent auction, demonstrations, faceting, cabbing, fossil cleaning, polymer

clay, "Youth Education Day" Fri., Gem Mine, Wheel of Fortune, Jewelry Making, door prizes, grand prize; contact Susan Postlethwait, 6719 Burnet Ln., Austin, TX 78757, (512) 458-9546; e-mail:

showchariman@austingemandmineral.org ; Web site: www.gemcapers.com