



THE VIRGINIA PEN



GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY OF THE VIRGINIA PENINSULA

MARCH 2014



WINTER FIELD TRIP

Special Points of Interest:

Annual Auction

- Sandy Bottom Park Nature Center
- April 3, 2014
- 7 PM

Treasures of the Earth Show

- Virginia Beach Convention Center
- April 25—27, 2014
- Volunteers Needed

May Picnic

- Saturday, May 17, 2014
- Sandy Bottom Nature Park's Courtyard Shelters 1, 2, and 3
- 10 AM—4 PM
- Food, Training & Friends
- Help Needed

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Al DeHart, Field Trip Coordinator Extraordinaire!

Twenty eight Peninsula and Tidewater members participated in a Winter Field Trip on March 8th to visit the Stone Goddess Rock Shop and University of Richmond's (UR) Lora Robbins Gallery of Art of

Design from Nature's exhibit on VIRGINIA ROCKS! As an unexpected bonus, our Field Trip coordinator, Al DeHart, shared the opportunity to also visit the nearby Packard's Rock Shop.

A visit to Richmond's Stone Goddess Rock Shop has been a tradition for our members. The shop owner, Red Kromm, provided a relaxing atmosphere to browse the shop's many treasures. Each section of the shop contained rocks from different countries and times in history. The shop had many new items and showcased crystals and minerals of every shape and color.

Next we visited the Lora Robbins Gallery. The doors were locked, and we had a personalized tour, including their current VIRGINIA ROCKS exhibit. The Lora Robbins Gallery is UR's natural sciences and decorative arts museum. The museum contains collections of natural objects, cultural art and artifacts, and decorative and fine arts. Over 100,000 pieces were showcased including Jurassic dinosaur fossils, contemporary glass art by Dale Chihuly, Hindu and Oceanic art, pre-Columbian vessels, ancient coins, rare gems and minerals, prehistoric shells, coral, and fluorescent rocks. Also of interest was a collection of Asian art and artifacts including more than 300 Chinese ceramics, spanning 20 centuries.

Packard's Rock Shop in Midlothian, VA was an unexpected find. The shop had fossils, stones and gems cut and rough as well as stamps, postcards and other small collectibles. The shop looks small from the outside but contains a huge quantity and assortment inside. The staff was available to answer your questions and more. This is a great place to browse, shop, and take your kids.



PEBBLE PUPS PROGRAM

We explore the wonders of rock, mineral, and fossil collecting. Our program participates with the Future Rock Hounds of America under the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies. Our purpose is to train youth members to become skilled rock hounds. Each meeting offers an opportunity for earning credit towards merit badge. There are 20 merit badges that can be earned. The merit badge program of guided activities are in these areas:



March Rocks!

1. Rocks and Minerals
2. Earth Resources
3. Fossils
4. Lapidary Arts
5. Collecting
6. Showmanship
7. Communication
8. Field Trips
9. Leadership
10. Earth Process
11. Earth in Space
12. Gold Panning and Prospecting
13. Gemstone Lore & Legend



Crammed Like Fossils



Planets! Planets!

14. Stone Age Tools & Art
15. Rocking on the Computer (Electronic Cataloging, WWW Rock Sites)
16. the World of Miniature (Pssammophile, Micro/Thumbnail Fossils)
17. Special Effects (Mineral Magic, 'TV' Stone, Triboluminescence)
18. Flourescent Minerals (Flourescent Wavelenghts, Flouresent Mineral Localities)
19. Reaching Across Generations (6 Hour Senior Member Mentorship)
20. Maps (GPS, Geological Maps, Geo-Caching)

2014 PEBBLE PUPS PROGRAMS TO DATE

January 2nd: "Earth in Space" - Solar System Models, Meteorites, and Craters

February 6th: "Fossils" forms of Life, Geologic Time, and State Fossils

March 6th: "Rock/Mineral" Characteristics, Identification Kits, and Building a Collection

LOOK AHEAD

April 3rd: Auction

April 25th—27th: Treasures of the Earth "TOTE" Show—Learn lapidary wire wrapping and GENI safety

May 17th: Picnic—Learn GENI safety and making cabuchon

June 5th: Gemstone Lore & Legend—Share your birth month gemstone and your lore, review fossil lesson/ game

YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED FOR OUR PEBBLE PUP PROGRAM

♦ **WAYS TO HELP, CONTRIBUTE OR LOAN**

CONTACT: CHRISTINE AT 757-725-2876

Senior Mentors: Spend 6 hours mentoring a young rock hounder/pebble pup.

Member, Member's Family/Friend/Neighbor/Acquaintance: Share knowledge about any topic above.

Members: Please contribute or loan any items/specimens to help enhance the topics above. Especially looking for, ulexite (TV stone), alexandrite/benitoite (pleochroism), hackmanite (tenebrescence) and or fluorite (thermoluminescence). If your going to a mine or quarry or just visiting another place/state, please bring back some rocks/mineral/fossils for the kids.

More info regarding the specific topic can be viewed on the site: http://www.amfed.org/fra/AFMS_FRA_Badge_Manual_Revised_2012.pdf

GMSVA

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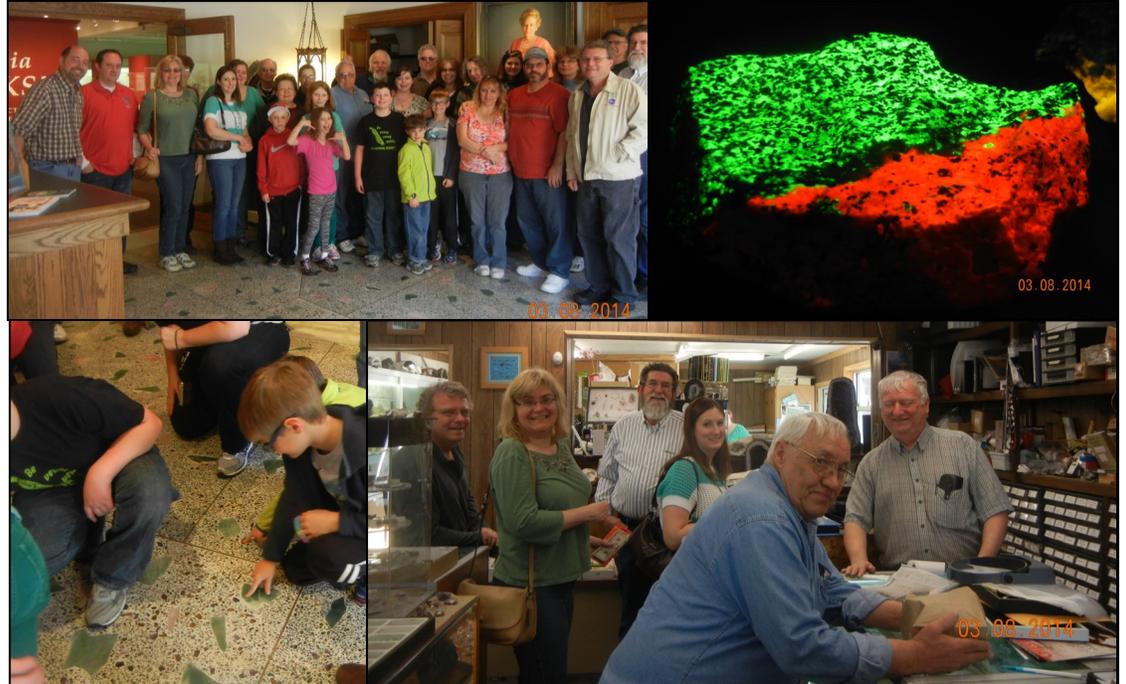
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WINTER FIELD TRIP PHOTOS



ANNUAL AUCTION—APRIL 3, 2014

The annual GMSVP fund raising auction is during our next meeting, April 3, 2014. We will have people begin setting chairs and tables up at 5:30 and arranging auction items displayed on tables to the right side of the meeting room. These are in addition to our normal food table and there will be more seating too. Everything will be a little more crowded.

As you enter from patio door, you register and pick up your bidding number at the first table on the right. We recommend one card per family for the adults and one card per Pebble Pup/Rock Star youth. There will be some auction items only for the youth members.

The auction items are on display along the side. If you wish to bid on an item, please move it to the front table. Write your bidding number and starting bid on a card and place it under the item. Then enjoy the food and company.

The meeting begins at 7 PM with a short business session and then the fun. Our auctioneer is our club president, Walter Priest. Items will be brought to him and bidding will begin. When he closes the bidding, you will be given the item and your tab will be maintained and adjusted at the registration table.

As you leave, you may settle using, cash, check, or charge card. Please come and enjoy the fun and company.

There will be a sign up sheet for the Treasures of the Earth Show, April 25 through 28, 2014. We need your commitments to help during the show. We need lots of helpers and you will have time to be trained for any and all positions. We need demonstrations, education/youth programs, geode sales, and cutting.



MARCH MEETING—THE YELLOW GEM MINE



GMSVP was again fortunate to have Ellie Pitts at our March meeting. Ellie, a true rock hound, spent much of last year's Spring through Fall in the wilderness of Idaho mining yellow opal. Our members were intrigued by her tale of battling the elements, wildlife, fire danger, and challenges with accessing and mining the opal. Her work was interrupted by a

wild fire that burned over the mine and the surrounding areas.

Our members were able to view and purchase opal that she mined and hauled out of the wilderness.



TOTE SHOW—APRIL 25—27, 2014



The first of the three Treasures of the Earth (TOTE) shows that GMSVP participates in is coming, April 25 – 27, 2014 at the Virginia Beach Convention Center. Our purpose for setting up our displays is to educate the public about Virginia's natural resources and our club. We have members display their collections and demonstrate the equipment we have.

Our members may use the club's equipment during the show and there will be members present to provide training on proper use and safety if you're new. There is time to see the show



Help is needed on Thursday April 24th to set up for the show. Meet at 1 PM at Atlantic Self Storage, 2401 Build America Drive, Hampton, VA 23666, to caravan over to the show site or meet us at Virginia Beach Convention Center at 2 PM. We will be setting up our area at the show. This takes about 3 hours; more volunteers, less time.

During the show we have four areas that need manning: demonstrations, education/youth programs, geode/slab cutting, and sales. **Volunteer sign up will be done at the auction.**

Show times are:

Friday: 11 AM - 6 PM

Saturday: 10 AM – 6 PM

Sunday: 11 AM – 5 PM



Additional help is needed help for about an hour to clean up and load equipment after the show ends on Sunday.

Members are reminded that we get free access to the show and that we are not competing with the other vendors or clubs.

Questions should be directed to Robert Mazzrillo, 757-465-5599.



NEW MEMBERS SINCE FALL 2013

Welcome new rock hounds!

- ◆ September 2013
 - Connie & Clifton Chadwick
 - Deborah & Sergio Gonzalez
- ◆ October 2013
 - Karen Edwards
 - Cook Family
- ◆ December 2013
 - Patrick Ryan
- ◆ January 2014
 - Maria, Tom, Isabella, & Henry Drozda
 - Pat & Dan Fontaine
 - Brenda & Lawrence Hawks
- ◆ February 2014
 - Sara, Mark, Ayden, and Camdyn Stuffel

PICNIC—May 17, 2014



GMSVP's 1st picnic is coming, Saturday, May 17, 2014. It will be at Sandy Bottom Nature Park's Courtyard Shelters 1, 2, and 3. These are near the Hampton Roads Center Parkway entrance to the park. The trailer and equipment should arrive about 9 AM, and we need help to set up the site. Once the equipment is set up and passes a safety check, members may start using it. All equipment is available for use from 10 AM through 4 PM. At 4 PM we need member help to clean the equipment and reload the trailer, takes about an hour.

The club will provide hamburgers, hot dogs, buns, condiments (i.e., ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, pickle relish, onions, lettuce, and tomatoes), soft drinks, and tableware. Members are asked to bring side, deserts, and anything else they would like to share. Food will be available from 11:30 AM through 3 PM. Come anytime and there should be something to munch on.

Members may use the equipment on-their-own or get instruction, if they don't know how to operate a specific machine. Don't be afraid to ask for help. There are members willing to help you. We all had to learn at some time in the past. Please be courteous and allow others who are waiting for a machine to use it too. As a guide, if no one is waiting, continue. Otherwise, if after 30 minutes and someone is waiting, finish that project and let the waiting party use the machine.

If you plan to attend, please call Gary Bergtholdt, 757-851-9620, by Wednesday, May 14, 2014, with the number of attendees.



Spring is here and you know what that means... Yes, it is time to start thinking about hitting the field and collecting all those awesome rocks again. But before you start rooting around in that rock pile looking for that prize, you should stop and think of the creatures that just might be living in it already. A trip to the field should not include a side trip to a hospital...



There are only two known poisonous spiders in Virginia, but both have bad reputations. The Black Widow is probably the more famous of the two spiders, however this spider is not really aggressive. The female Black Widow is easily identifiable by her shiny black body and distinctive scarlet-red hourglass shape on the underside of her abdomen. Males will have red spots and white markings on their undersides. The spider's name derives from the female's occasional habit of killing and consuming the male after mating. Most bites on humans are the result of an intrusion into the spider's nest, which the spider builds in woodpiles, rotting tree stumps, corners of garages or any small unoccupied, undisturbed hole. The female guards the nest throughout the summer and this is when most bites occur.

A person usually doesn't feel pain until several hours after a bite, then he or she may also experience nausea, fever, burning in the skin, aching abdomen, and possibly difficulty breathing. While symptoms generally dissipate in healthy adults within four days, the venom of the black widow can be lethal to very young children and the elderly.

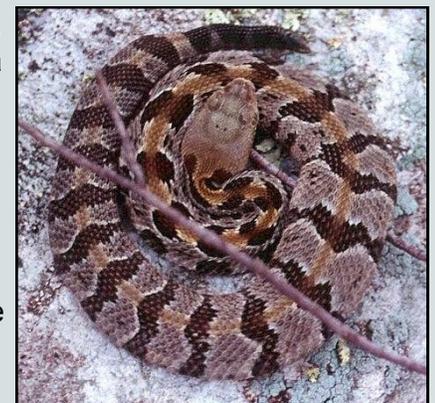
While the brown recluse has been reported in Virginia, sightings are extremely rare and, so far, confined to the western regions of the state. The brown recluse is light to chocolate brown in color, has three pairs of eyes arranged in a triad of three pairs which is one of the main diagnostic features for recluses, and a dark violin-shaped marking that extends behind the head toward the body. They prefer dark, dry, undisturbed crevices, such as under rocks and the loosened bark of dead trees or logs. In a home, a brown recluse will live inside cracks in the walls and in or behind storage boxes. They are incredibly tolerant of one another and can be found in very high numbers within a single location. In fact, "where there is one, there are many" would typically be an accurate rule of thumb! The brown recluse has an outsized reputation because its venom causes necrosis of the skin where the bite occurs. Most bites start out as a blister, which can be accompanied by fever, chills, nausea and in rare cases, convulsions or death. The cells of the affected area die and are shed, in some cases leaving behind a large hole that takes a long time to heal and recover.



There are only three species of venomous snakes in Virginia. The Copperhead is a heavy-bodied, medium-sized venomous snake that grows to a length of 24-36 in. The head is triangular and coppery-red with an hourglass pattern. There are dark, rounded spots on the sides of the belly and the scales are weakly keeled. The upper side of the body and tail are pinkish tan to dark brown, with hourglass-shaped crossbands colored chestnut to dark brown; most dorsal scales are sprinkled with black flecks. Juveniles have the same color patterns as the adults, except that the tip of the tail is a sulfur yellow

and juveniles lack the black flecking of the adults. There are regional differences in body color and pattern throughout Virginia. This snake is found statewide, in a wide variety of terrestrial habitats, including wetlands, forests, fields, and edge areas of all types. The copperhead is found in open areas with higher rock densities, and uses all types of structures for cover, including abandoned buildings, brush piles, and stone walls.

The Timber Rattlesnake grows to lengths of 36-60 in. There are two major color patterns: (1) the yellow phase, in which there are black or dark brown crossbands on a ground color of yellow, brown, or gray; the crossbands, which may be V-shaped, break up anteriorly to form a row of darker spots down the back, plus a row along each side of the body; (Cont'd on Pg 7)



SNAKES, BEES AND SPIDERS....OH MY! (CONT'D)

and, (2) the black phase, in which the head is black and there are black blotches and chevrons on a ground color of dark brown to nearly black. This species will emerge from hibernation in April and May. This species occurs at elevations up to 6000 feet, and sometimes higher, in the Blue Ridge, in the far western mountains, and in the western Piedmont. It inhabits upland hardwood and mixed pine-hardwood forests, in areas where there are sunny, rocky slopes and ledges. This snake needs places to hibernate that allow it to stay below the frost line, such as large cracks in rocky outcroppings.



The Canebrake Rattlesnake is a large, venomous snake that grows to lengths of 36-60 in. The canebrake rattlesnake is pinkish to light tan with dark-brown to black blotches and chevrons, and it has a marked stripe down the back and a stripe from the eye to the jaw. The pupil of the eye is vertical and elliptical. The black tail is tipped with a rattle. Males grow larger than females. It is listed as state endangered. This species inhabits hardwood and mixed hardwood-pine forests, cane fields, and the ridges and glades of swampy areas in localized areas of southeastern Virginia. It overwinters in the base of hollow trees or in stumps.

There are many different types of wasps, bees, and hornets in Virginia.

They will nest in many different types of locations to include trees, holes, under rocks, in brush, even old abandoned cars. Bees can only sting once then die; wasps and hornets however can sting multiple times and suffer no effects. If a nest is disturbed they will defend it vigorously, if one is injured away from the nest others nearby may attack to defend the wounded individual as well. Most will go about their business foraging for food and ignore you, some however, such as yellow jackets, are much more aggressive and likely to attack than others. Be observant of the area around you. If you see insects flying to and from a particular place, avoid it!



Fire ant mounds are found in warm, sunny locations such as landscape beds, lawns, around trees and shrubs, along sidewalk cracks and against buildings. If disturbed, these ants are generally aggressive and can inflict painful stings. Fire ants clamp onto their targets with powerful jaws and sting their victims repeatedly. Each sting injects a dose of venom that causes a burning sensation. The stings raise itching blisters that can become infected. In sensitive victims, the stings can cause anaphylactic shock (symptoms include trouble breathing and fainting) or even death. The counties affected by Fire Ants in Virginia

are James City and York and cities of Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach and Williamsburg.

Bear sightings are becoming common throughout much of Virginia. Adult black bears are approximately 4 to 7 feet from nose to tail, and two to three feet high at the withers. Males are larger than females. Black bears have small eyes, rounded ears, a long snout, large non retractable claws, a large body, a short tail, and shaggy hair. Depending on the time of year, adult female black bears commonly weigh between 90 to 250 pounds. Males commonly weigh between 130 to 500 pounds. Incredibly adaptable, black bears occupy a greater range of habitats than any bear in the world. Bear home ranges must include food, water, cover, denning sites and diverse habitat types. Although bears are thought to be a mature forest species, they often use a variety of habitat types.



What should you do if you see a bear? Enjoy and keep a respectful distance! In most cases, the bear will move on quickly. Normal trail noise should alert bears to your presence and prompt a bear to leave before you ever see it. Bears usually run and hide from people. Never approach the animal, and observe it only from a distance. Make it aware of your presence by clapping, talking, singing or making other sounds. If you encounter a bear at close range, remain standing upright, avoid direct eye contact, back up slowly and speak in a calm, assertive and



GMSVP MARCH 5, 2014 MEETING MINUTES

- Walter Priest opened the GMSVP meeting.
- The minutes were approved as submitted.
- The 2014 budget was presented to the General membership. It was moved to accept the budget as presented; it was seconded and approved by voice vote.
- Committee Reports
 - * Field trips
 - * Silver smith class has openings available.
- Old Business none presented.
- New Business
 - * The next general meeting, April 3rd, will be an auction of various rocks and some club equipment.
 - * The next month's meeting will be our picnic and workshops, May 17. Any business normally handled in the General Meeting will be discussed at the picnic.
- The meeting was adjourned for presentations. There were 2 presentations:
 - * TOTE Show owners, Allen and Chuck White presented their vision for the shows. They stated that there will be no changes in the relationship of our club with the TOTE shows. They announced that there is a new show in Doswell, VA. Our club was invited to set up a booth for this show, June 6, 7, 8.
 - * The Yellow Gem Mine. The second presentation was presented by Elli Pitts about her work at the yellow opal mine she owns. Her work was interrupted by a wild fire that burned over the mine and the surrounding areas.

Minutes prepared by David Scharff, Mar 24, 2014, //Original signed//

Budget Item	2010 Budget	Actual	2011 Budget	Actual	2012 Budget	Actual	2013 Budget	Actual	2014 Budget	Actual
Insurance	\$700.00		\$700.00	\$211.20	\$500.00	\$257.60	\$300.00	\$0.00		\$466.00
SFMS dues	\$0.00	\$122.50	\$228.00	\$165.00	\$250.00	\$221.14	\$250.00	\$157.50		
EFMLS Dues	\$228.00	\$208.25	\$224.00	\$224.00	\$250.00	\$277.03	\$300.00	\$182.00		99.75
Field Trips	\$50.00	\$48.51	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$50.00	
FOSB "donation"	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$600.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	
Hospitality	\$325.00	\$207.09	\$200.00	\$191.05	\$200.00	\$62.43	\$500.00	\$35.16	\$700.00	
Historian/Library	\$75.00	\$0.00	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$150.00	\$0.00	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$250.00	
Membership	\$0.00	\$115.92	\$0.00	\$29.30	\$50.00	\$125.38	\$30.00	\$0.00	\$50.00	
Memorial/Donation	NA	NA	NA	NA	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$200.00	
Newsletter/Prinying	\$1,700.00	\$1,175.15	\$1,000.00	\$904.00	\$800.00	\$641.80	\$350.00	\$488.01	\$500.00	
Postage	NA	NA	NA	NA	\$100.00	\$55.26	\$100.00	\$55.26	\$100.00	
Pebble Pups	NA	NA	\$200.00	\$31.68	\$450.00	\$659.40	\$1,600.00	\$285.03	\$1,035.00	
Picnic Shelter	NA	NA	\$80.00	\$80.00	\$80.00	\$80.00		\$160.00		\$160.00
PO Box Rent	\$70.00	\$70.00	\$70.00	\$60.00	\$66.00	\$66.00	\$100.00	\$76.00		\$76.00
Gift/Honorarum	\$0.00	\$108.04	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$75.44	\$200.00	
Purchases - Rocks	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	\$400.00	\$0.00	\$400.00	
Purchases - Equipment	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	\$400.00	\$650.25	\$500.00	
Programs and Meetings	\$150.00	\$59.91	\$250.00	\$15.15	\$200.00	\$51.73	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$100.00	
Publicity/Website	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$100.00	
Shows/Special Events	\$5,834.43	\$5,312.57	\$4,000.00	\$3,821.28	\$4,000.00	\$2,579.98	\$2,700.00	\$4,215.34	\$4,000.00	
Equip Maintenance	\$650.00	\$536.62	\$650.00	\$589.93	\$650.00	\$439.05	\$500.00	\$562.51	\$600.00	
Self Storage	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	\$1,500.00	\$1,469.47		\$1,469.47
Trailer Maintenance	\$75.00	\$0.00	\$75.00	\$0.00	\$75.00	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	
Trailer Registration/Tax	\$8.90	\$8.90	\$8.90	\$8.90	\$10.00	\$8.41	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10.00	
Workshops	NA	NA	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$300.00	
Total	\$10,416.33	\$8,473.46	\$8,435.90	\$6,931.49	\$8,581.00	\$6,125.21	\$10,780.00	\$9,011.97	\$9,695.00	\$2,271.22