



# THE VIRGINIA PEN

GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY OF THE VIRGINIA PENINSULA



June 2015

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Walter Priest

### **Special Points of Interest:**

#### **GMSVP July Meeting**

- U.S./Brazil Geology Exchange Program
- Sandy Bottom Nature Park's Nature Center
- July 2, 7 PM

#### **TOTE Shows**

- VA Beach Convention Ctr
- July 17—19
- October 16—18

#### **Coal & Gem Mine Field Trip**

- Beckley, WV
- July 25

#### **GMSVP August Meeting**

- Rock Swap
- Sandy Bottom Nature Park's Lakeside Shelter
- August 6, 6 PM

#### **Wildacres Workshop**

- Little Switzerland, NC
- August 17-23 (SFMS)
- August 24-30 (EFMLS)
- September 21-27 (SFMS)

#### **Fall GMSVP Picnic**

- Sandy Bottom Nature Park
- September 12

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I am sitting on my back porch recovering from a double hernia operation. It is no fun. I held out long enough to attend the Pipsico Fossil Hunt on June 13th. The first one we had last fall was freezing cold. This one was screaming hot. Regardless, we had over a dozen members participate. Many treasures were found including a sand tiger sharks tooth by Robert. It was a beautiful, but hot day, and everyone appeared to be having fun.

Our June meeting was a great success with the program by Dr. Chuck Bailey from the William and Mary Geology Department on earthquakes in Virginia. It was most informative, and I know everyone learned something new. I certainly did. It is truly amazing how the forces of nature work to shape and “shake” our world.

I got a call from Cabell Sale, the son of former member, Dr. Thomas Sale, who passed away not too long ago. He indicated his family would like to donate their father's extensive collection of minerals and lapidary material to the GMSVP including many, many slabs and some of his equipment. This is an extremely generous gift to the Club. Since I am still recuperating, Hank Woods gathered a work party of Chuck and Doug Rogers, Michael Griffith and another volunteer to pick up the donated materials and transport them to Chuck's for temporary storage. The Board will meet to sort through the material and prepare it for sale and/or auction at the August meeting Rock Swap.

Incoming new member, Joe Delizzio who was at the May Picnic, has some lapidary equipment for sale on Craig's list. Dan recently sent out links to items for sale.

(Cont'd on pg 4)

**GMSVP Purpose:** The purpose of the GMSVP is to facilitate the exchange of information and general cooperation among its members by promoting the study of lapidary techniques, mineralogy, paleontology, and allied fields of Earth sciences, to provide the community with a knowledge of the hobby through lectures, demonstrations, and exhibitions and to enjoy good fellowship.

**Visitors Welcome:** The GMSVP welcomes any visitor with an interest in geology, mineralogy and the lapidary arts. Whether you are a hobbyist, artist, collector or interested in Earth Science, the club has something for everyone. Dues information is under [Frequently Asked Questions on the GMSVP Website](#).

**Meeting Location:** Our meetings are held at [Sandy Bottom Nature Park](#) in Hampton, VA. Check the GMSVP website [Events](#) page for actual dates and times. The upcoming meeting information is in the Special Points of Interest area on the left of this page.

**GMSVP**

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**Web:** <http://gmsvp.weebly.com/>  
**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Gem-and-Mineral-Society-of-the-Virginia-Peninsula-GMSVP/275041405841489>

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**VA Beach July TOTE Show—VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Dan Fontaine

**Volunteers can sign up by contacting Robert Mazzrillo at [spazzagorilla@yahoo.com](mailto:spazzagorilla@yahoo.com).**

GMSVP has a booth at the Treasures of the Earth (TOTE) Show being held at the Virginia Beach Convention Center on July 17—19, 2015. The booth will include displays about Virginia's natural resources and our club.



Members also will display their collections and demonstrate the equipment. As a fund raising activity, our club sells geodes at the show, which we cut with our rock saws. These shows also are a great medium to increase awareness and gain new members.

Any of our members may use the club's equipment during the show. All they have to do is sign up to reserve a time. While the equipment can be used without a reservation, those signed up will have first preference. Members will be available to provide training on equipment proper use and safety for new rockhounds. Volunteers have ample time to also see the show.

**HELP NEEDED:**

- **Thursday, July 16th:**
  - ◊ **1 PM:** Volunteers should meet at our club shed at the Sandy Bottom Nature Park to load the truck and caravan over to the show site or can meet us at Virginia Beach Convention Center at 2 PM.
  - ◊ **2:30 PM:** Truck unloading and GMSVP booth/ equipment setup. Booth and equipment setup takes about 3 hours; more volunteers, less time.
- **Friday, July 17 to Sunday, July 19th:** During the show, GMSVP booth/ equipment have four areas that need manning: demonstrations, education/youth programs, geode/slab cutting, and sales.
- **Sunday, July 19th:**
  - ◊ Booth and equipment cleanup, teardown, and loading at the end of the show.
  - ◊ Truck unloading at the club's shed in Sandy Bottom Nature Park.

Members are reminded that we get free access to the show (bring your GMSVP membership card) and we are not competing with the other vendors or clubs.

Questions should be directed to Robert Mazzrillo at [spazzagorilla@yahoo.com](mailto:spazzagorilla@yahoo.com) or by calling 757-465-5599.

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# US-Brazil Geology Exchange Program

## GMSVP July 2nd Meeting Program

Barbara Priest, Program VP



Sara Beth Phillips, geologist, will be our presenter at the July 2<sup>nd</sup> GMSVP Meeting. During the summer of 2004, Sara participated in the US-Brazil geology exchange program. This involved studying at two different universities in Brazil on the subjects of mining engineering and geology. Sara's presentation will illustrate that experience. She will also bring mineral samples and items representing the Brazilian culture for viewing after the presentation." Sara is a 2005 Tennessee Technological University (TTU) graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree in Geology and is our GMSVP Field Trip Coordinator.

This promises to be another exciting program. See you there!

## Earthquakes in Virginia, Past , Present, and Future

Dan Fontaine

Source: U.S. Geological Survey <http://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/eqintheneWS/2011/se082311a/#summary>



Our GMSVP June meeting speaker was Dr. Chuck Bailey, a structural geologist and the Geology Department Chair at the College of William and Mary. His topic was "Earthquakes in Virginia, Past , Present, and Future." He gave a very interesting and dynamic presentation, which included Virginia geology, earthquake science, the cause of the August 23, 2011 Virginia earthquake, and an overview of the history of earthquakes in Virginia.

The following information related to the earthquake was summarized from the U.S. Geological Survey site (see above source).

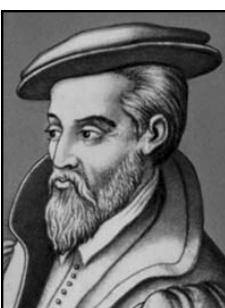
On August 23, 2011 at 1:51 PM, Virginia experienced a 5.8 magnitude earthquake. The earthquake occurred about 3.7 miles down and about 5 miles from Mineral and 7 miles from Louisa. Moderately heavy damage occurred in Louisa County. Widespread light-to-moderate damage occurred from central Virginia to southern Maryland including Washington D.C. Minor damage was reported in Delaware, southeastern Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey. The earthquake was felt south to Georgia, north to Canada, and west to Detroit and Chicago.

The earthquake occurred as reverse faulting on a north or northeast-striking plane within a previously recognized seismic zone, the "Central Virginia Seismic Zone."

Earthquakes in the central and eastern U.S., although less frequent than in the western U.S., are typically felt over a much broader region. East of the Rockies, an earthquake can be felt over an area as much as ten times larger than a similar magnitude earthquake on the west coast.

## Father of Mineralogy—Georgius Agricola

Source: Diamond Dan Publications, Mini Miners Monthly February 2015 Vol. 9 No. 5



Georgius Agricola was born on March 24, 1494 at Glaucau in Saxony (Germany).

By the time he was 33, he was hired as the town Doctor at Joachimsthal, which was a mining and smelting area. While there he studied ores and smelting, which led to publishing a famous book in 1556 titled, "De Re Metallica," about mining and different ways of extracting metals from ores. In this book he also described how ore bodies occur underground.

Agricola died on November 21, 1555.



(Cont'd from pg 1) Our next TOTE Show is July 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> at the Virginia Beach Convention Center. Please check with Robert Mazzillo at the July meeting to sign up to help. We need people to help load the truck and set up on Thursday, to work the booth on Friday, Saturday and Sunday and to take down everything and return it to the shed on Sunday. The more people we have the easier it is. This is also a great time for new members to get involved with the Club, especially if you want to learn how to use the Club's equipment, learn how to cab, wire wrap or cut slabs from rough. All of our equipment will be set up, and all of our members are more than happy to sit down with you and show you how.

Our next field trip is to a coal mine in West Virginia on July 25<sup>th</sup>. Please see our Field Trip Coordinator extraordinaire, Sara Phillips if you are interested in attending.

We will have our regularly scheduled Board of Directors meeting on June 29<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM at Sandy Bottom Nature Park. Everyone is invited to attend even if you are not an Officer or Board member. We welcome your input.

The Program for the July 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting will be presentation by our own Sara Phillips on her adventures in the mines of Brazil while she was in graduate school.

Last, but not least, do not forget about our Rock Swap at the August meeting. We are trying something new and hope it will become an annual event. This is an opportunity to weed out those extra slabs you have laying around, showcase some of your projects and perhaps pick up some new and different materials for future projects. The Board also plans to have materials from the Sale donation for purchase or maybe a silent auction. It will be outside in the pavilion next to our meeting room. It will start early at 6 PM so we have plenty of daylight. Hope to see you there.

Rock on,  
-Walter

## James River Fossil Hunt

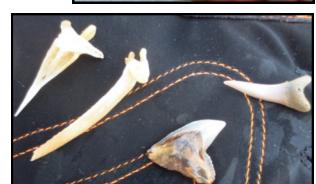
Dan Fontaine

Reference: Geological Society of America; Guidebook for Field Trip 7b, Stratigraphy of the Chesapeake Group of Maryland and Virginia by Blake W. Blackwelder and Lauck W. Ward

On June 13th, GMSVP joined members from the Mountain Area Gem and Mineral Association (M.A.G.M.A.) to look for fossils from the early Miocene to early Pliocene geologic periods along the banks of the James River at the Pipsico Scout Reservation in Surry, VA. The James River is within seven formations that form the Chesapeake Group of Maryland and Virginia. The formations are successively younger in time. The formations in ascending order include:



- Calvert Formation: 14 million years old. The Calvert Formation was named for the strata exposed at the Calvert Cliffs along the Chesapeake Bay in Calvert County, MD. This formation spans a large area from Washington, DC to Richmond, VA that reaches to sea level.
- Choptank Formation: 13 million years old. The Choptank Formation was named for the strata on the Choptank River in Talbot County, MD. The formation overlies the Calvert Formation but has a much more restricted basin. Macrofossils are abundant in parts of the formation.
- Little Cove Unit: 12 million years old. The Little Cove Unit was named for the geographic feature in Clavert County, MD and is distinct from the St. Marys Formation and occupies a different (Cont'd on pg 9)



**VOLUNTEERS MAKE A GOOD CLUB GREAT! GET INVOLVED!**

**- A Special thanks to members contributing articles to the newsletter!**

## Safety Matters

Ellery Borow, AFMS Safety Chair

Source: AFMS Newsletter Vol 68, No. 6, June—July 2015



Dangers That Lurk in the Dark.....and in the light can be present in many of our rockhound activities. Think of the avid field collector using power tools to drill holes in rocks so that they can be split using feathers and wedges—what a dust cloud is raised!

Think of the lapidary artist using her home-made machine with all its exposed drive belts and pulleys—both just waiting to grab a loose long sleeve cuff.

Think of some kids in a quarry hammering on a rock—with sharp, splintery, rock shards spraying in all directions.

All the situations just described have obvious dangers—inhaling rock dust; catching clothing, hair and fingers in equipment pinch points; sharp shards damaging eyes, etc. While those situations harbor obvious hazards, other situations may not be so obvious as hazards.

Let's think of that avid field collector once again. To arrive at his work site he may have taken a short cut and walked across a small stream. Well, take it from one who knows, wet rocks can be very, no make that extremely, slippery. Falling and getting wet may not be all that serious, but falling and breaking a bone most certainly is.

Soldering on that silver pendant may produce a striking work of art; however, the flux and pickling fumes could be highly toxic.

Wandering around a famous quarry to collect fluorescent minerals after dark one may see incredible treasures. What one may not see are the holes of unknown depth. Even a very shallow hole may cause one to lose ones balance—especially after dark.

Another commonly ignored and often under appreciated hazard is not keeping ones fingers in view. Reaching over an edge to grab a hand hold? Ones out of sight fingers could find not a hand hold, but instead, a very unwelcoming critter hiding there out of sight. And not being able to see ones fingers as one holds a rock on that slab saw is just asking for pinch point trouble.

Putting your fingers in a hole to pull out the treasures therein? Again, take it from one who knows from experience, there could be something besides treasures in that hole, pocket, vug, cavity or crack. There could well be something that bites, stings, etc., inside.

Working at that club show or workshop? A simple tester found at most hardware or electrical supply stores can be used to check those outlets, extension cords and power strips. While circuits can either work or not work, there are additional issues such as poor, faulty or missing grounds, reversed polarities and non-functioning GMCI's that are not so noticeable with just a glance.

Always keep in mind the potential of hidden dangers lurking in our rockhound hobby. Keep in mind that it is not just the dark of night that harbors hidden hazards, although night is when the monsters come out isn't it?

Please be safe with what you do and keep in mind the potential hidden dangers, as well as the not so hidden dangers lurking just around the corner.

Your safety matters!

## New GMSVP Members—Welcome Rockhounds!

Donald and Cynthia Piercy and Makayla Brindle



2014 S.C.R.I.B.E. Clipart DVD

**GMSVP JULY MEETING**

**JULY 2ND, 7 PM**

**SANDY BOTTOM NATURE CENTER**

**HAMPTON, VA**

## Diamond Hill Mine & Former Rucks Pit

Robert Mazzrillo

We had heard about the Diamond Hill Mine while on a MAGMA club dig at Graves Mountain last year, and it was highly recommended by several people we talked with about it. The problem is that the mine is located on the western edge of South Carolina roughly eight hours from Hampton Roads. Bit of a drive for a day trip! As much as we wanted to go, we had to put it off until we had more time to spend getting there and back.

We decided to take a family trip over the Memorial Day week. Diamond Hill Mine was our first stop on the drive down. From there we headed to the Atlanta Aquarium, Universal Studios in Orlando, and finally to visit the relatives in Hollywood, Florida. While routing the trip, I said "You know... Ruck's Pitt isn't THAT far out of the way..."? May as well make a "trip" into a "TRIP," right? So we decided to throw that in as well.

So Friday at around 3 PM we headed out with buckets, picks, rakes, two dozen pairs of gloves, extra clothing, boots, shoes, and enough sunscreen to protect us from an actual walk on the sun. The plan was to stay at a hotel about 2-3 hours from the Diamond Hill Mine (closest available), get to the mine Saturday around 10-11 AM, and go from there.

The Diamond Hill Mine is in the middle of NOWHERE on a dirt road. But with good directions, and a map, and GPS, we didn't have any trouble getting there. But a few times we may have doubted the GPS, and I freely admit that I was listening for the Banjos from Deliverance out the window... We arrived at the "Mine" when I noticed a huge dirt pile on the side of the road through the trees, a porta potty, and cars parked nearby. There was a sign further up the dirt road near the entrance. We drove in and parked and were very warmly met by the owner of the mine who was sitting in a half buried shipping container he used as the mine office. We talked for a bit, and he shared where to dig for what we wanted. The site had a camp site, picnic tables, even a fire pit made up of rocks from the mine that had some really nice quartz pockets everywhere in them.



So after getting the gear out, sunscreen on, and extra bottles of water, we were off! Picture about a 4-acre solid dirt field, random low hills of dirt scattered here and there, zero plants anywhere except the forest around the edges, and the sun beating down from roughly what appeared to be three feet above your head and you have an idea what I was looking at. The brothers who own the mine said: "Quartz crystals are everywhere, skeletal is over that way, "ghost or milky" is over there, amethyst is by that tree, and smoky is back that way. You can take as much as you want, if you want a large yard rock or three, help yourself!" We mentioned we were military and got the advertised discount and they even thanked me for my service as well. We signed the release forms and off we went.

Looking at the dry, dusty, mini-desert I found myself in, I had my doubts. It looked a lot like what I expect the moon or Mars looks like. Lance and I picked a direction towards "the pit" about 50 yards away and started walking. We crested a small hill and the word pit doesn't do justice to the hole we found. It was huge, like a mini mining operation. I could have fit my house in the bottom with room to spare. We continued walking the road/trail around to the left of the pit and I was kicking small clumps of hard clay when I kicked one and it broke apart and was full of teeth like points! I picked it up, it was about the size of my fist and when I knocked away the rest of the clay it was a small plate of white quartz points, the longest being around  $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Well I'll be... Then I started really looking. And was I surprised. The stuff was literally everywhere. From single crystals up to what had to be every bit of a 400 pound car door sized boulder with a pocket face the size of a basketball in it. I set down my equipment and told Lance "I'm taking this rock." He looked dubiously at the mass of the thing and said "Good luck with that Dad, I'm not carrying it." (Cont'd on pg 7)



### REMAINING 2015 EFMLS & SFMS WORKSHOPS

EFMLS: Wildacres on August 24-30, 2015—<http://efmls-wildacres.org/>

SFMS: Wildacres on August 17-23, 2015 & September 21-27, 2015—<http://www.sfmsworkshops.com/>

GMSVP Committee Reports are included in the minutes toward the end of the newsletter.



(Cont'd from pg 6) I figured that I could break pieces of the rock off with the sledge, hoping that I wouldn't break apart the pocket. Then I got to work. I started on the outer edge breaking chunks off, but there was a problem... The thing was LOADED with smaller pockets inside the rock. Almost every piece I broke off revealed another pocket, anything from 2-3" across up to a "vein" that went for a foot or more! I filled three homer buckets within 30 minutes with pieces of the boulder, and it wasn't even down to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of where it started. It got to the point where I would break open a new pocket and, if it wasn't "GREAT," I



would toss the piece onto the trail for someone else. After about 3 hours, 4 buckets were filled from this one boulder. I broke the pocket that I wanted in half but discovered even better looking pockets inside the break. I loaded roughly a 60 to 80 pound rock into the truck that looked awesome! Kelly and Lance filled another 3 buckets just surface looking. By then we were hot, tired, and hungry, so we hit the picnic tables for lunch.

After lunch we talked with the owners again. They pointed us to the side of the "office," where there were rocks everywhere from around coffee mug to truck tire size with pockets, plates, and loose points. We filled another 4-5 buckets in the space of two hours. I was leaving stuff behind that, when we first got there, I would have never set down! But at this point I had so much that, if it wasn't near "Smithsonian display" quality, we were just too tired to carry it the hundred yards to the truck. People were walking by and I would yell out: "Here take this." More often than not they would reply: "Thanks, but I have too much now!"

We finally decided that if we did not leave, we might not ever leave, so we forced ourselves to stop and loaded the last of our treasures into the truck for the trip. We had the entire front half of the bed of the truck filled with buckets, yard rocks, and pieces that just wouldn't fit in the overfull buckets. We thanked the owner again, and headed off tired, but happy. We are already planning on going back as we never even made it to the Amethyst section... It was just too hot in that sun! Next time we bring the shelter!

I won't bore you with the Atlanta aquarium trip, lets just say I won't be going back to Atlanta anytime soon.

Orlando was awesome! We stayed at a hotel right across the street from Universal Studios. We got to ride everything we wanted, saw both the Harry Potter worlds, and were tired and happy when it was over.

Next stop Ruck's Pitt, which we found out had been sold and is now "The Fort Drum Crystal Mine." First some history that we learned (AFTER we had gone to the "mine") from the owner of "Ye Olde Rock Shoppe" Audrey, who's husband Fletcher also happens to be the Hollywood, Florida rock club president.

As the story goes, Rucks Pit didn't start as the best place to dig for calcite clams; it had a VERY different beginning.

- The owner of a dairy farm was having a rough time making ends meet, the farm was not making very much money, and the farmer was barely keeping ahead of the bills. There were huge ongoing highway expansions going on at the time, so the farmer, Eddie Ruck, decided to dig into an existing mine pit that was there from the early 1900's from previous road building and start again selling road base aggregate material for cash. This was in 1961.
- When he expanded the pit in 1987 and got down to about 75 feet, he discovered fossils to include calcite filled clamshells, bones, teeth, tortoise shells, etc. However since they used dynamite to break the rock, the fossils were broken to bits and, I was told, he threw the pieces aside as interesting but worthless as he figured nobody would want that stuff. He continued to dig for road materials which were paying the bills.
- People eventually heard about the fossils from a geologist who was surveying for the state in 1985, and started asking if the fossils could be purchased. In 2002, he stopped using dynamite in the mining process and the fossils started coming out by the bucket load once they got past the blast zones. (Cont'd on pg 8)





(Cont'd from pg 7) It wasn't until 2003 that he allowed a local rock club into the mine to collect and realized that he could make money on the fossils, possibly even more than the road materials that he was selling. He then started commercially collecting the fossils for sale.

The mine was sold in 2004 to Dickerson Florida Inc., which halted collecting due to mine concerns and ground water filling the pits. In 2005 they again opened the mine to collectors.



Back then it was \$45 a person for one 5-gallon bucket. A few years pass and the pit was closed because it was no longer economically viable. The pit filled with groundwater. They eventually sold the mine and the RV park for development.



People are now only allowed to dig the "tailings" piles at the "new" mine. The cost is \$60 a person for a 5-gallon bucket, and it is not digging in the mine proper as that is closed permanently. Like a lot of old mines, this is digging in the leftover tailings people have sifted through for years, and it is not on the same property as the mine proper, it is located at a second site across the road on another farm. This is the entire story as was told to me, again, after we had gone there.

So enter our family. We showed up to the new "Fort Drum Crystal Mine" at around 11 AM and met the owner, his dog, and a goat. The tailings area looked exactly as I expected, a small, raised, barren field, roughly 50 feet by 200 feet, piled with gray colored hard dirt and broken shells littered everywhere mixed in. We were showed around, he showed us his workshop with some nice specimens of calcite clams as works in progress and he then explained the best way to search for our own finds. Basically take a garden hose attached to pipes spread out through the site and spray the ground with water, then claw through it with garden tools or a rake.



So off to work we went. While the findings were something young rockhounds would like, it was disappointing to a serious collector. We dug for about 6 hours, not even stopping for lunch. At one point I had dug a trench 9-feet long by two-feet wide, by three-feet deep in the pile. I found a few small specimens. The best of which is a small maybe 2" long mussel type shell that is whole, with a small hole on one side, and

inside are calcite crystals the longest of which is maybe  $\frac{1}{4}$ " long. Most of our finds were only a half shell with some honey colored solid calcite that appears under the shell if it is broken apart.

I started searching through the larger leftovers from other people's efforts. There were loads of rocks and clusters of the clams laying around to poke through. I found a few pieces worth taking but nothing like the classic calcite clam finds you see at shows or online for sale.

I do not know if they have access to other tailings they collect and dump from time to time to freshen the pile at the mine, that might be worth checking into. But if it is only the one pile spread out as we found it, I do not think I would go again.

A graphic featuring a Tyrannosaurus Rex head on the left and a blue Facebook 'Like Us' button on the right. The button has the word "facebook" in a large, lowercase, sans-serif font. Below the button, the text "Join our online chat!" and the URL "www.facebook.com/virtualmuseumofgeology" are displayed. The bottom right corner features the logo for the Virtual Museum of Geology, which includes a stylized blue and yellow dragon-like creature.

## Bring Out Your Creative Juices!

Steve Weinberger, Wildacres Chair

Source: EFMLS News Volume 52, Number 8, June—July 2015



When we were given the May and August dates for Wildacres this year, we heard from many of you that this was great. By May the weather warms up a bit and in August this year we do not have to contend with the Labor Day holiday as has happened in the past.

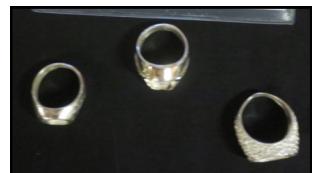
Your response to filling the May session was quick, and luckily we could fill all our registration requests and thus have no waiting list. We're just back from that session and can report that as usual, the week was just terrific.

**The August session however, is a different story. As was the case last year, our current registration puts us in danger of losing the session.** This would be a shame because we have a varied series of interesting classes to offer and a dynamic speaker, Denise Nelson. Denise is preparing new talks for us that sound just wonderful.

In addition, because of the August dates, we are able to bring back two outstanding and very popular instructors who would not have been able to join us had we been scheduled for September! You can see the list of classes at: <http://efmls-wildacres.org/page5/index.html> and find a registration form at: <http://efmls-wildacres.org/styled-7/index.html>.

**Please share this news with your club members and encourage them to send in their registrations asap.** And, if you "advertise" in your June club newsletter and e-mail me a copy (efmlswildacres@gmail.com), your club will be entered into the Wildacres scholarship contest we've been talking about these past few months. The drawing will be held in mid-July and one lucky member of an entered club will win that scholarship to a 2016 workshop (it could just be your club!).

So, if you are even thinking about attending, send in immediately! If we can get our minimum number of registrants by July 10 we can proceed with our plans for this exciting session and not have to cancel any classes...or worse yet, the entire session.



## James River Fossil Hunt (Cont'd)

Dan Fontaine

(Cont'd from Pg 4) overlapping basin. The unit occupies a small area in Maryland near Calvert Cliffs and the Patuxent River. This area may contain numerous mollusks.

- St. Marys Formation: 11 million years old. The St. Marys Formation was named for exposures in St. Marys County, MD. This formation is mainly in Maryland and seems to reflects the uplift of Maryland. The formation has abundant and diverse mollusks.
- Claremont Formation: 10 million years old. The Claremont Formation was named for exposures along the James River in Surry County, VA. The Claremont Formation extends from St. Marys County in Maryland to North Carolina. In our area it extends from near Richmond to Hampton Roads, VA. The formation overlies the Calvert Formation. The Claremont Formation contains quartz and phosphate pebbles and cetacean, turtle, and fish bones.
- Cobham Formation: 7 to 9 million years old. The Cobham Formation was named for exposures at Cobham Wharf on the right bank of the James River in Surry County, VA. The formation overlies the Claremont Formation in the area of Cobham Wharf and is easily recognized and extends from southern Maryland to North Carolina.
- Yorktown Formation: 4 to 5 million years old. The Yorktown Formation was named for beds on the York River at Yorktown, VA. The formation extends from near the Maryland border down into North Carolina. There is great mollusk species diversity in this formation. Fossils are generally abundant and well preserved.



Mollusk shells were plentiful, with some Chesapecten Jeffersonius shells found. A few shark teeth and a couple of whale bones also were found. We had a fun day of fossil collecting and greatly appreciated M.A.G.M.A. inviting our club to join them in the fossil hunt.

**Field Trip #3—Coal Mine Tour and Rock/Mineral Sieving in Beckley, WV**

**Point of Contact:** Sara Phillips ([SPhillips@ecslimited.com](mailto:SPhillips@ecslimited.com))

**Date:** Saturday, July 25      **Sources:** [www.beckley.org/exhibition\\_coal\\_mine/](http://www.beckley.org/exhibition_coal_mine/) & [www.someplacespecialgemmine.com/](http://www.someplacespecialgemmine.com/)

**Locations:** #1) Beckley Expedition Coal Mine, 513 Ewart Avenue, Beckley, West Virginia 25801  
#2) Some Place Special Gem Mine, 323 Rakes Road, Shady Spring, West Virginia 25918

**Details:**

At the Exhibition Coal Mine, one can ride through the dark passages of a vintage coal mine. The guides are veteran miners and provide firsthand accounts of the daily responsibilities and travail of past and present day miners. In addition to the Mine, one can tour the period coal camp buildings situated throughout the grounds. Lovingly restored, the Coal Company House, Superintendent's Home, Pemberton Coal Camp Church, and the Helen Coal Camp School, give visitors a true representation of early 20<sup>th</sup> century coal camp life. Visitors are asked to bring a jacket because the temperature is always 58 degrees inside the Mine.

The Youth Museum's central exhibit area features an average of three different interactive exhibits yearly. Group tours include a visit to the Museum's Planetarium. Seasonal programs highlight constellations, visible planets and special celestial events. Behind the Museum's main building, stands the Mountain Homestead. Developed to enrich history studies, the Museum has recreated a typical settlement on the Appalachian frontier. Trained interpreters explain the importance of each of the eight reconstructed historical building. Visit the weaver's, the log house, and the one room schoolhouse and experience "readin', writn', and rithmatic" as it used to be. The barn, blacksmith shop, and general store all help to complete this rich historical journey of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Field Trip Itinerary (this field trip will happen rain or shine)**

- **9:50 AM:** Meet in Beckley Expedition Coal Mine parking lot  
**Group Rate Admissions:** **ADULTS: \$14.00 (18 and over); CHILDREN: \$ 8.50 (ages 4 - 17)**
- **10:00 AM:** Group tour begins with an underground tour (in a coal car) and tour of the surrounding grounds
- **12:00-12:30 PM:** Group picnic lunch on-site at the gazebo/picnic tables/or covered amphitheater. You **must** bring a picnic lunch (there are no food facilities on-site).
- **12:30-1:30 PM:** We will be touring the youth group museum and gift shop
- **1:30-2:00 PM:** Drive to Some Place Special Gem Mine (about a 15-20 minute drive from coal mine)
- **2:00 PM-???:** Sieve through buckets of materials to find gemstones (stay as long as you want).
  - ◆ 2.5 gallon buckets of sieving materials are \$10.00 each
  - ◆ Website coupons and family specials are available (SEE WEBSITE)

**THIS IS A CASH ONLY FACILITY!!!**

See information on the website ([http://someplacespecialgemmine.com/Home\\_Page.php](http://someplacespecialgemmine.com/Home_Page.php)) and below for some helpful hints to make your adventure more enjoyable.

- It gets a bit muddy here at the mine, so wear old clothes and shoes.
- Seating is provided, but it's not padded. A nice cushion will help ease any sore spots.
- There are covers over the flumes, but a rain coat is advisable.
- We provide small plastic bags, but if you are planning a large mine adventure, a bucket or large heavy bag is a nice addition to have (Yes, you may have that many gemstones when you leave).
- Sunblock is suggested.
- This is a farm setting and bugs are present, so bring along some bug spray to help keep em' at bay.
- Cameras are allowed here, so bring one along to capture your adventure.
- Be sure to bring a towel to dry off.



## Minutes for the General Meeting of June 4, 2015

Pat Fontaine

- The meeting was brought to order at 7 PM by President Walter Priest at Sandy Bottom Nature Center. Walter welcomed guests and new members.
- First Vice President Brenda Hawks asked new members to pick up their membership cards from her. She also requested that members return their name tags at the end of each meeting.
- Second Vice President Barbara Priest reminded us that the speaker at the July meeting will be Sara Phillips, who will relate her experiences in Brazil. In August, we will meet on our usual day (1<sup>st</sup> Thursday), outside at the pavilion for a rock swap.
- The next board meeting will take place at 7 PM on JUNE (not July) 29, hopefully in the Sandy Bottom Nature Center. Walter will send out an e-mail later in June.
- Secretary Pat Fontaine stated that there were no meeting minutes for the May meeting, because our annual picnic/workshop replaced the usual meeting. The minutes for the April meeting were included in the April newsletter, which had been sent to all members. Those minutes were accepted without change.
- Treasurer Gary Bergtholdt reported that he has deposited all checks in his possession. The club currently has \$15,344 in checking, \$667 in savings, and \$3,670 in a CD.
- Newsletter editor Dan Fontaine restated the need for members to submit articles for publication, particularly if the member visits an interesting location while traveling on vacation this summer.
- Webmaster Holly Worsham had nothing new to report.
- Field trip coordinator Sara Phillips reminded us that our next field trip will take place rain or shine. We will meet at Pipsico at 9 AM on Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup>. Our July field trip will be to the Expedition Coal Mine in Beckley, WV. All details are included in the last newsletter. In addition, she will send out another e-mail reminder for each trip.
- Property Manager Hank Woods reported that all equipment is clean and in good shape. The club's vibrating flat lap and a rock tumbler were sold at the picnic.
- Hospitality Coordinator Kelly Mazzrillo thanked everyone for bringing food for the meeting. Kelly once again put together a wonderful buffet, featuring summer salads.
- Treasures of the Earth (TOTE) show coordinator Robert Mazzrillo reminded us that help will be needed to set up, run, and take down the coming July show in Virginia Beach. We were reminded to let prospective new members know that there is also a gem club in Virginia Beach, if that is more convenient for them.
- Kelly Mazzrillo will create a new sign for display in the foyer.
- Pebble Pup coordinator Christine Hempley stated that the Pebble Pups have been working on maps and GPS information.
- Anthony Hubbard will be offering silversmithing classes in July. Please contact Anthony at the meeting or at [lanexa05@gmail.com](mailto:lanexa05@gmail.com), if you are interested in learning silversmithing.
- Members shared their experiences at both Wildacres and the William Holland School of Lapidary Arts. If our club makes a sufficient donation (\$1000), we could send a member to William Holland for free. Also, there are still openings available for the August session at Wildacres.
- The business portion of the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 PM, so that we could all enjoy our speaker, Dr. Christopher (Chuck) M. Bailey, Geology Chair at the College of William and Mary. He is a structural geologist. His topic was "Earthquakes in Virginia, Past, Present, and Future." He gave a very interesting and dynamic presentation, which included Virginia geology, earthquake science, the cause of the August 23, 2011 Virginia earthquake, and an overview of the history of earthquakes in Virginia.

Minutes prepared by Pat Fontaine

June 5, 2011

/original signed/



## AFMS CODE OF ETHICS

I will respect both private and public property and will do no collecting on privately owned land without the owner's permission.

I will keep informed on all laws, regulations or rules governing collecting on public lands and will observe them.

I will to the best of my ability, ascertain the boundary lines of property on which I plan to collect.

I will use no firearms or blasting material in collecting areas.

I will cause no willful damage to property of any kind - fences, signs, buildings.

I will leave all gates as found.

I will build fires in designated or safe places only and will be certain they are completely extinguished before leaving the area.

I will discard no burning material - matches, cigarettes, etc.

I will fill all excavation holes which may be dangerous to livestock.

I will not contaminate wells, creeks or other water supply.

I will cause no willful damage to collecting material and will take home only what I can reasonably use.

I will practice conservation and undertake to utilize fully and well the materials I have collected and will recycle my surplus for the pleasure and benefit of others.

I will support the rockhound project H.E.L.P. (Help Eliminate Litter Please) and Will leave all collecting areas devoid of litter, regardless of how found.

I will cooperate with field trip leaders and those in designated authority in all collecting areas.

I will report to my club or Federation officers, Bureau of Land management or other authorities, any deposit of petrified wood or other materials on public lands which should be protected for the enjoyment of future generations for public educational and scientific purposes.

I will appreciate and protect our heritage of natural resources.

I will observe the "Golden Rule", will use "Good Outdoor Manners" and will at all times conduct myself in a manner which will add to the stature and Public "image" of rockhounds everywhere.