



THE VIRGINIA PEN



GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY OF THE VIRGINIA PENINSULA



June 2014

President's Corner

Special Points of Interest:

GMSVP Meeting

- July 10, 2014
- 7 PM
- Sandy Bottom Nature Center

Treasures of the Earth Show

- Virginia Beach Convention Center; July 18—20

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Fellow Rockhounds,

Welcome to Summer. We just returned from a wonderful field trip to the Vulcan Materials Dale Quarry near Richmond. Approximately 15 GMSVP members made the trip in search of the elusive beryl. A couple members, the Fontaines, were successful in their quest. It seems I accidentally picked up a piece attached to some smokey quartz. Not a great specimen but beryl I believe it is. Erin Robertson found a nice piece of

garnet, and the Huff's also found some garnets among the pegmatite minerals. The July meeting would be a great time to show off your fantastic finds from the Dale Quarry trip.

I was searching the internet for information on some of the minerals that I collected and found something interesting from the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy Office in Fontaine Research Park, 400 Ray C. Hunt Drive, Charlottesville (very close to the I-64 Exit 118). It seems that they have their own rock garden of Virginia rocks and minerals on display at their office. Click on the link to check out their publication on the rock garden: www.dmme.virginia.gov/commercedocs/VM%2048_2_3.pdf. I think you will find some specifics on some of our old friends from the U.S. Silica Mine, Dale Quarry, Willis Mountain and other sites from around the Commonwealth. It might good field trip opportunity.

The May Picnic and Workshop was a resounding success. We had almost forty members participate. Thanks to Kelly Mazzrillo for organizing a wonderful luncheon. Thanks also to Hank Woods and the Roadie crew that set up all of the equipment. The Silent Auction sold 18 items that netted the Club \$197.00.

The next TOTE Show is coming up on July 18th – 20th. Please see Bob Mazzrillo at the July meeting to sign up to help out at the show. No previous experience is necessary. We will train all successful applicants for these positions.

See the article in this newsletter on the Dale Quarry Field Trip and look for the article next month on our Rose River Rock Collecting Field Trip.

Last, but not least, remember the July Club meeting has been shifted to July 10th because of the 4th of July holiday weekend.

Rock on,
-Walter

THE NEXT GMSVP MEETING IS ON JULY 10TH

GMSVP

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Facebook: [https://](https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Gem-and-Mineral-Society-of-the-Virginia-Peninsula-GMSVP/275041405841489)

www.facebook.com/pages/The-Gem-and-Mineral-Society-of-the-Virginia-Peninsula-GMSVP/275041405841489

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Wildacres—Let's Keep the Fun Going!

Steve Weinberger, EFMLS Wildacres Committee Chair

Source: EFMLS News, Volume 51, Number 8, June-July, 2014



Last month I shared with you my concern for holding our Fall EFMLS Wildacres session due to low enrollment. While I'm still very concerned, I'm gratified at the number of very positive articles I've seen written in numerous club bulletins during the past month. Thank you.

I'm pleased to report that our registration numbers have improved, but only slightly and our session is still in jeopardy. What's holding you and your members back?

Here are a few comments gleaned from club bulletins and written by past attendees:

"The knowledge and skills of the instructors were only exceeded by their desire for everyone to have a great experience, learn some new skills, and wind up with a project (or projects) which would hopefully result in people acquiring new lapidary related skills so that this wonderful hobby continues to have active practitioners."

"I cannot think of a better way for a rockhound to spend a vacation."

"Wildacres is an experience not to be missed. You will be enriched, fulfilled and gratified. Not only is Wildacres beautiful, but the people are equally so. Where else can you be and have everyone around you share your same passion and enthusiasm for the natural world and the Lapidary Arts?"

So now it's your turn to find out for yourself how wonderful a week our Eastern Federation Workshops at Wildacres really are. Visit the EFMLS Wildacres website (efmls-wildacres.org) to see photos, learn about the fall classes and speaker, and download a registration form.

The cost for the week of fun and learning is \$390 per person (plus a reasonable fee for the materials you use in class or classes you take). The tuition fee includes room and board (comfortable rooms, delicious meals), class instruction, talks by our Speaker-in-Residence Justin Zzyzx and so much more.

Let's not allow our September session to be but a memory! Register now and join us "on the mountain" September 1 - 7.

I look forward to meeting you there.



Treasures of the Earth Show

Virginia Beach Convention Center July 18—20, 2014



Volunteers needed for GMSVP booth to share club information, sell geodes, and use club equipment.

Contact Robert Mazzrillo at:
spazzagorilla@yahoo.com to volunteer.

New GMSVP Members

Welcome new rock hounds!

◆ March 2014

- Valerie, Malcolm & Sophia Rathbun

◆ April 2014

- Kimberly, Sydnee & KJ Evans
- Marty (Martha) Sharpe
- James Trist
- John Eckhardt

GMSVP May Picnic

SANDY BOTTOM NATURE PARK

Weather was perfect, and food and fellowship were abundant at the May GMSVP picnic. Our members took advantage of the club's rock saws and cabochon and faceting equipment. For the first time, a silent auction provided an opportunity for club members to bid on some beautiful specimens.

Suggested improvements for next year's picnic included:

- Have club brochures and a club poster on an easel available for nearby people in the park to find out more about GMSVP.
- Have a separate auction for pebble pups with smaller, cheaper priced stones.



GMSVP June Meeting Program— Uranium Mining in Virginia: A Radioactive Question



Dr. Jim Kaste, Associate Professor, Geology Department, The College of William & Mary, led an engaging discussion about uranium mining in Virginia and related radioactive issues. The Coles Hill site alone has enough uranium available to power all current nuclear power generation reactors in the United States for three years. All our GMSVP members at the meeting left with an increased awareness of related issues being studied.

Jim's talk outlined the following (pictures used with

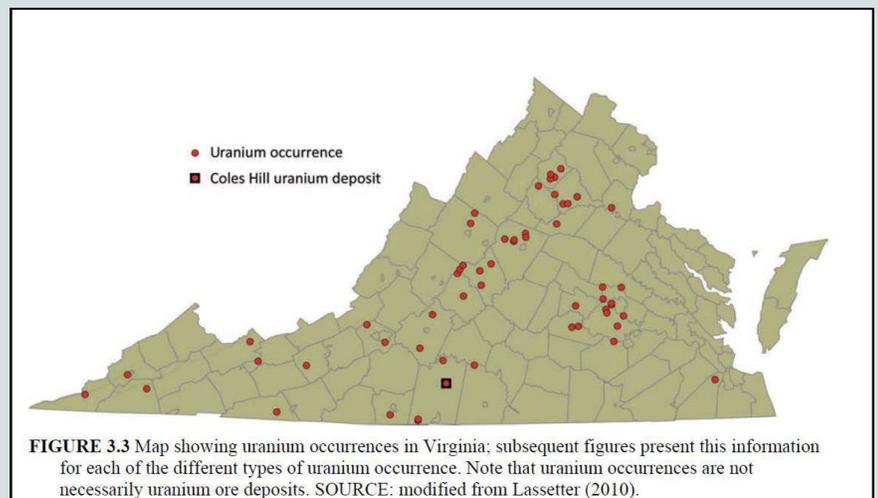
permission from brief):

- Geology: Why do we have uranium in Virginia? Coles Hill deposit.
- The General Process of Uranium Mining: Potential toxicity and hazards. Downstream concerns (VA Beach Report)
- Perspectives: Balancing risks of uranium mining with the known costs of status quo.



Uranium is present throughout the crust in trace amounts (~1-5 ppm)

The picture to the right shows uranium occurrences in Virginia. Most of the uranium deposits in Virginia (including Coles Hill) were formed by hydrothermal processes that accompanied the rifting of Pangea approximately 200 million years ago. An exception to this are the small concentrated uranium occurrences closer to the coast that are associated with marine deposits of phosphates (teeth, shells, bones). Sites in Suffolk, for example, have higher than background uranium concentrations at the surface because of marine deposits over the last 5 million years or so.



The National Academy of Sciences National Research Council was tasked to undertake a study about uranium mining, processing, and reclamation to assist decision-making by the Commonwealth of Virginia. The study included the physical and social context of uranium mining and processing; occurrences and exploration status and potential markets; options and best practices for mining, processing and reclamation; and potential impacts. See the study for additional information. http://dls.virginia.gov/commissions/cec/files/NAS_study.pdf

Wildacres Could Go Away—Forever!

Al DeHart

I attended the Richmond Gem and Mineral Society (RGMS) Club meeting on June 10th. At that meeting Pamm Bryant, the Wildacres Registrar, announced that they currently **do have** the minimum amount of applications to proceed with the Fall 2014 Session for Wildacres. Pamm said that there are still openings available for the Fall Session. Pamm stressed that if the regional Club members don't eventually take advantage of this opportunity, this site could ultimately shut down. It is a great value. Register now! <http://efmls-wildacres.org/>

FOSSIL FESTIVAL

May 23-25, 2014
Main Street, Aurora NC

Friday 6pm - Opening Ceremony
6:30pm - Little Miss Fossil Contest
7-11pm - Mickle Buck Band

Saturday 7:30am - 5k Run
11am - Parade
3pm - Live Auction
7-11pm - Old Southern Moonshine Revival Band
ALL DAY - Lawn Mower Pulls, Car Cruise In, Lecturers, Vendors, Exhibitors, Entertainment, Confederate Encampment, Children's Rides & Games, Food & Fun!

Sunday 10am-3pm - Church Service Gospel Music



Aurora Fossil Museum
400 Main Street, Aurora, NC 27806
(252) 322-4202
www.aurorafossilmuseum.com
Like us on Facebook!



Sponsored by the Aurora /Richlands Township Chamber of Commerce

Aurora Fossil Festival 2014 Guest Speakers



9:30 - Fossils of North Carolina, the CD-Rom Project
Dr. Richard E. Chandler
Professor Emeritus of Mathematics
North Carolina State University



11:00 - The Evolution of Whales
David J. Bohaska
Collections Management, Vertebrate Paleontology
Smithsonian Institution of Natural History



1:30 - FOSSIL- A National Network of Amateur and Professional Paleontologists in the United States
Dr. Bruce J. MacFadden
Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology
of the Florida Museum of Natural History

Speeches will be conducted in the Aurora Fossil Museum Educational Center. Try to arrive 10-15 minutes in advance to ensure you get a seat.

Live Auction

Aurora Fossil Museum
May 24, 2014 at 3:00pm

Over 200 items available including megalodon teeth, beautiful shells, and native american knives! With everything from amethyst to dinosaur poop, there is something for everyone!

(See the full list of items available in the County Compass)

Please arrive and sign up by 2:30 on May 24th to get your number



Estimated value ranging from \$25 to \$2,500

Fossils from 400 million BC to 6 thousand BC



Aurora Fossil Museum
400 Main Street, Aurora, NC 27806
(252) 322-4202
www.aurorafossilmuseum.com

Photography donated by Eastern Sky Photography

Our first visit to the Aurora Fossil Festival was both fun and educational. We found the festival rather remote but well worth the trip. Parking was adjacent to the festival and plentiful which was handy to drop off our treasures during the day.



Chuck Rogers with his sisters enjoy the festival.

Because two of our grandchildren, Jake and Allie, came with us, we spent most of the time on the rides and digging for fossils. So on this trip, we missed the Fossil Museum, speaker presentations, rock club displays in the Community Center, and the two Smithsonian paleontologists manning a booth to identify fossils for anyone who brought them their treasures. These definitely will be "must do's" when we go next year!

Al DeHart, GMSVP Field Trip Coordinator, is a friend of the Fossil Museum and volunteered to sell tickets for the 6-inch shark tooth raffle during the day. Sorry to have missed you, Al but thrilled that Cole found the whale vertebra! Chuck Rogers with his two sisters as well as two past GMSVP Club members, Jane and Greg Bodensick were spotted at the festival.



Cole Terrill, Al DeHart's grandson, found his first fossil, a whale vertebra!

We were somewhat surprised to find the dirt with fossils dumped in large piles on the festival field. This configuration allowed us to dig while easily taking breaks for shopping, food, and rides. With little effort, we found many fossilized shark teeth and bone of varying sizes. We were surprised again when we found a second dirt pile next to the Fossil Museum. The fossil hunting brought pleasure and excitement to the many rock hounds scattered across the dirt piles. All were anxious to chat about their latest find. (Cont'd on next page.)



Pat Fontaine with grandchildren, Jake and Allie, search for fossil bone and teeth.

Of course, our grandkids had to check out the inflatable rides. They were impressed that the rides were different from the rides typical of a regional fair. They had a blast with the laser tag, Tiki rock climb, bucking bull, and American gladiator inflatables. They also enjoyed the bungee jump and a ride that was like a flight simulator.



Food was plentiful with a selection for most tastes. The lemonade and homemade ice cream were especially tasty.



Toward the end of the day, we made a tour of the booths. The fossils at the booth were varied to suit most desires and priced to suit most budgets.

Now for the back story. PotashCorp is the main employer in the Aurora, NC region with more than 800 employees and hundreds of contractors. The company provided a free and very interesting



bus tour of their mine and chemical plant. PotashCorp mines phosphate ore, is a world leader in fertilizers, and provides ingredients for many common products from food to wood and metal finishing to cleaning compounds. One of the byproducts is the dirt with fossils that was available for digging at the Aurora Fossil Festival.

For those rock hounds interested in fossils, the Aurora Fossil Festival makes a wonderful day trip from the Hampton Roads area. Our grandson gave an ultimate seal of approval, when he said: "Grandma, let's do this every year!"

Register Now for the Fall EFMLS Wildacres Workshop!

SEPTEMBER 1—7, 2014

Hands-on instruction include: Cabochons (transforming a rough piece into a shiny, well-formed cabochon); Silversmithing (making a textured, sterling silver ring (band) and a textured, sterling silver pendant; Geology (basic introduction to rocks and minerals and the study of the earth); Glass Engraving & Etching (learn the difference between engraving and etching); Faceting (cutting and polishing a brilliant gemstone); Lost Wax Casting (learn the basic techniques for lost-wax jewelry casting); Soapstone Carving (get a general introduction to the carving of soapstone); and Wire-wrapped Jewelry (learn the fundamentals of wire art jewelry).

For additional information and registration, see: <http://efmls-wildacres.org/>.



While returning from a vacation in Louisiana, Brenda and I found time to try our hand at diamond mining at the Crater of Diamonds state park in Murfreesboro, Arkansas. We arrived on the April 22nd, did a quick orientation that included a short video on how to mine for diamonds then set up camp in the RV Park located within the state park. We mined on April 23rd and 24th and headed for home early on the next day.

The week before our arrival, a 6.19 carat white diamond was found at the Crater of Diamonds, and the day we arrived a 30 pt (about a 1/3 carat)

diamond was found, so we were pretty excited that our timing was good.

The diamond mining area is nothing more than a large area that has been plowed, and is re-plowed periodically. There are three ways to mine. First, you can simply walk the field looking for diamonds on top of the ground. This is especially successful after a hard rain that washes the top layer of soil away exposing the diamonds. The second way is to dry sift for diamonds. It's just like it sounds, place a shovel full of dirt in a screen and work it till all the dirt is gone leaving behind rocks and diamonds. This method is best suited when the dirt is very dry. The third way to mine, and the most successful way, is to wet sift. This is the method we chose since it had been a while since the last rain, but the soil was still too wet to dry sift. To wet sift there are two screens, a coarse screen and a fine screen. The coarse sits on top of the fine screen, you load it up with dirt, dunk it in the water trough and start working the dirt into mud. Eventually you end up with the fine screen loaded up with small rocks (guaranteed) and diamonds (maybe).



We met a young man there that mines diamonds every day. He was able to wet sift 100 five gallon buckets of dirt each day. By contrast, Brenda and I worked pretty hard at it and probably did a dozen five gallon buckets in two days. There is a lot to be said for technique! So, bet you're wondering if we found any diamonds...Not this time. In fact no diamonds were found in the park during the two days we mined. But all was not lost.

The Crater of Diamonds state park is known to produce items of interest other than diamonds for rock hounds like us and if you pick it up you can keep it! The most prevalent is Jasper. The mining area is littered with Jasper, it is everywhere. (Cont'd on next page.)



GMSVP Members Hunt for Diamonds in Arkansas (Cont'd)

Larry Hawks



Needless to say, I brought home a five gallon bucket full of Jasper. Another rock that is a bit more elusive than Jasper, but not too hard to find, is Agate. While the Jasper we picked up was baseball to softball size, the Agate size ranged from very small to paper plate size. The Crater of Diamond Agate is a flat rock with sand stone on top and bottom, so I picked up and returned a lot of sandstone. In the end I was able to pick up a five gallon bucket of Agate to go with my Jasper.

All in all this was a very worthwhile trip, and we plan on doing it again someday. I would definitely recommend giving the Crater of Diamonds a try if you find yourself in that part of the country, or make it the focus of a weeklong vacation! Maybe we would have found a diamond if we would have stayed a couple more days.

Hazel's Notes—AFMS Club Rockhound of the Year Award

Hazel Remaley, EFMLS President

Source: EFMLS News, Volume 51, Number 8, June-July, 2014



Here we go to summer. Did I miss something? Did we have a spring? As I write this in early May, we in the northeast have not had much warm weather.

We've had wind, rain, wind, chill, and did I mention WIND??? I think that this might be a precursor to a hot, humid summer. We can't do anything about the weather except talk about it.

As you know, I've been highlighting our committees in my messages this year. This month, I'd like to tell you about the **AFMS Club Rockhound of the Year Award (ACROY)**.

Every club has the chance to choose a member or a couple per year for this recognition. But, according to the report given at the last convention, very few of our clubs thought they had anyone worthy of this. Didn't anyone do anything? Who did all the jobs no one else wanted to do? Who made sure that the field trips were organized? Who brought the door prizes or refreshments in for each meeting? Who was always there to set the chairs up at every meeting? These might seem like

trivial chores, but there are certain members who do all this and more in every club. They might not be officers, but they are the mainstay and the cement that holds the club together. Why not give them some public recognition?

Think about all these questions and then make a selection.

Did I mention that junior members may also be recognized? Since this is also an American Federation program, those you recognize will be acknowledged in both the EFMLS and AFMS Newsletters.

Our Eastern Chairman is Ellery Borow and he's most diligent each month in encouraging you to act on behalf of your club. Ellery, did I steal your thunder this month? Sorry about that, but I hope it adds to your thunder!!

Another reminder --- Wildacres fall registration! Do it NOW!!!

This will be my last message until the September issue, so I will wish all of you a very safe summer filled with family fun and field trips.



They do! The eyes have it all! They give us depth perception, amazing colors, pattern perception in that pretty jasper slab -- our eyes draw back the curtain on our window to the world.

Judging by experiences with all manner of rock and mineral collecting, it appears that the vast majority of our field identification of minerals and rocks is performed by visual means alone. Indeed, we use our eyes to judge the mating of facets on that stone we are cutting, to lay out the cabochon template on that pretty slab of jasper, to follow the visual clues of the trail as we hike to that long lost rock quarry. There is an endless variety of how we use our eyes in our hobby. Our eyes allow us to enjoy many areas of our rock, mineral, fossil hobby that we might otherwise be unable to pursue.

So, why do I see so many folks pursuing the hobby without protection for the valuable resource that is their vision? I see folks hammering rock, grinding stones, working in dusty environments, spending hours in the blindingly bright sunlight -- all without benefit of suitable eye protection. It seems strange that folks would so risk the precious gift of sight.

I have heard numerous reasonable-sounding arguments as to why protection was not being used during vision-risking tasks. Excuses such as “my goggles were accidentally left home,” “the goggles’ elastic straps are worn out and no longer hold them in place,” “the goggles are too scratched or hazy to see through,” “the goggles were run over by a truck,” “the lenses keep falling out,” “they are uncomfortable to wear,” and other excuses too numerous to list. Well, trust me on this one, there are numerous solutions to these problems. Goggles are cheap (relative to the cost of eye surgery or vision loss). Lots of places sell goggles. Most hardware, grocery, department stores sell them. One does not need to visit a rock shop to find goggles. Please consider keeping an extra pair or two on hand.



Courtesy of 2014 SCRIBE Clipart

There are replacement lenses available for many styles of goggles. New and replacement goggle straps can be made from elastics found in sewing, fabric and yard goods stores.

Store goggles in a protective box or case and keep them in the collecting bag so they are not inadvertently left home. Goggles are ill-fitting? There are numerous goggle styles. Visit a store and try on various kinds to locate ones you find comfortable.

Can't find well-fitting goggles? There are other ways to protect one's eyes such as face shields, prescription safety glasses, safety glasses that fit over one's own regular prescription glasses, and aviator style goggles -- among others.

Please consider protecting your precious gift of sight. We also hope you use that precious gift to keep reading these safety matters columns.

Your safety matters.



Those that participated in the Vulcan Materials Dale Quarry Field Trip were not disappointed. We met at the quarry where some of the newer club members got help from seasoned

rock hounds assembling our hard hat inserts. You would think that that it would be intuitive, but it wasn't.



Kenneth (Rock) Johnson, the Vulcan Materials Dale Quarry Supervisor and our gracious host, provided the requisite safety training. Rock was joined by Kristen Thomas, Vulcan Materials Mining Engineer, to lead our caravan down into the quarry. With our vehicles secured with wheel chocks, and our rockhounds properly attired with safety equipment, the day's fun commenced.



Our group of rockhounds explored berms on the two lowest levels. In the past, garnets, beryl, apatite, magnetite, microcline, molybdenite, muscovite, and zircon have been found in the quarry. Pink feldspar and mica were abundant on both levels and made enticing pieces to collect. Many specimens were found to cut up into future cabochons. However, our rock hounds thirst for garnets and beryl was not satisfied on the first site.



We then caravanned to the next level where beryl was more common. Smoky quartz was scattered throughout the berms on this level. The finds of the day included a rock with five small garnets, a rock with a larger piece of garnet and a number of rocks with beryl, including



a matching set of beryl crystals.

All of our vehicles had poorer gas mileage on our trip back home due to all the stones collected during our day in the quarry.

Our thanks to Al DeHart, GMSVP Field Trip Coordinator, for setting up the trip and also to our Vulcan Materials hosts, Rock and Kristen, for ensuring our safety and enhancing our rock collecting experience.

Come to the July 10th meeting to see some of the specimens collected!



Smiling, Lucky Rockhounds at the Vulcans Material Dale Quarry!



There were many smiling faces by the end of the field trip. It was a fun day for our new as well as more experienced rockhounds. The greatest challenge was deciding which specimens to take home!



Erin Robertson with a nice piece of garnet.

Pat and Dan Fontaine were all smiles on their first field trip. Pat shows off a nice green beryl specimen. Our Vulcans Materials host, Kristen Thomas, was pleased with the find.

The Fossils of York River State Park

Dan Fontaine

GMSVP members are fortunate to have a wonderful fossil site in our area.

Millions of years ago this area was covered by a shallow sea that extended to Richmond. As the sea receded, rivers and streams carved deeply into the land. Whales, porpoises, sharks, clams, scallops, and snails all left traces of their existence as fossils. These fossils are visible as the Yorktown formation that was created about 5 million years ago.

Fossils are visible along the York River State Park riverbank cliffs and on the beach.

Please make sure you obtain a pamphlet at the visitors center that outlines rules related to fossil collecting. For example, they ask that you not dig on the riverbank cliff faces and that you limit what you take from the park to a few representative specimens so that others may enjoy finding fossils. Group collecting, digging, and/or removing large numbers of fossils require a Collecting Permit.





Minutes for the General Meeting, June 5, 2014

The meeting was called to order by the Walter Priest. Walter dispensed with the minutes as we have not had any meetings in the last 2 months.

Committee reports:

- Field Trips
 - ◆ Al DeHart reported that the Aurora Fossil Festival was a great success.
 - ◆ Al DeHart reminded everyone about the field trip to Vulcan Materials Dale Quarry at Chester, VA, on June 7th. GMSVP members may still sign up before the end of the meeting. Participants are meeting at the quarry at 8:30 AM.
 - ◆ Robert Mazzrillo shared that the Rose River Rock Collecting Field Trip is on June 14th. Lance Mazzrillo will be leading the trip in support of getting a Pebble Pup badge. Participants are meeting at the Graves Mountain Lodge in Syria, VA at 10 AM.
- Work shops: Renee Eichman asked how many were still interested in a wire wrapping class, and whether meeting on weekends or during the week would be more preferable.
- Membership: Mike Griffith announced that we have received several new members. We now have 122 followers on our Facebook web page.
- Shows: Robert Mazzrillo said the next Treasures of the Earth (TOTE) Show at the Virginia Beach Conference Center will be on July 18th—20th with set up on July 17th. Sign up sheets for volunteers will be available at our next meeting. Volunteers are needed to fill our activity.
- Walt stated our next meeting will be on July 10th, as the normal date would be on July 3 (holiday weekend).
- Property: Hank Woods announced that he has put a new blade on the 16" saw. Club members may contact Hank to use the saw.
- Silversmithing Class: Anthony Hubbard stated that this month's class was full.
- Treasurer: Gary Bergtholdt reported the club's checking account is \$11,121, and savings has \$660.
- Pebble Pups: The question was asked if we need to order the Mineral of the Month for our youth. Robert Mazzrillo stated that when we organized the shed recently we have enough minerals to use as the Mineral of the Month for the rest of the year.
- Newsletter Editor: Dan Fontaine requested input for the June Newsletter. He mentioned that some guidance is available from EFMLS for article development.

Tonight's program was presented by Dr. Jim Kaste, Associate Professor, Geology Department, The College of William & Mary, about uranium mining in Virginia. Very informative presentation with much discussion.

Minutes prepared by David Scharff

June 10, 2014

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