THE VIRGINIA PEN

GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY OF THE VIRGINIA PENINSULA

March 2015

President's Corner

Walter Priest

White is no longer on my list of favorite colors. I am now more partial to green. I have really missed seeing everyone after having to cancel the March meeting due to frozen sunshine. The April meeting coming up will be our annual auction. Our Hostess Extraordinaire, Ms. Kelly Mazzrillo, is planning a pizza party for your culinary enjoyment. Please look for an e-mail from Kelly on how you can support the pizza party. I hope to see everyone there.

Speaking of the auction, take some time to go through your stashes of material to see if there are things that you can live without to donate to the auction. The money we raise helps us to keep going and having fun.

The new TOTE Show at the Hampton Convention Center is coming up on March 27th-29th. We will be transporting our equipment on Thursday, March 26th. We will meet at the shed at 1 PM to load the truck. The new geodes also need to be priced and marked that afternoon. During the Show, we hope to organize and number the auction items for the April meeting. If you have anything to donate to the auction, please bring it to the Show. This is a new venue for us that promises a whole new clientele to amaze with our spectacular geodes and our superb lapidary skills.

Recently, I had the opportunity to give a presentation on rocks and minerals to a group of home schooled children. It was a simple presentation; what is the difference between a rock and a mineral, what are the three types of rocks and a few other bits of nickel knowledge about geology. The children were most attentive and interested in what I had to say. I found it to be most rewarding and fulfilling. I say this because I think this is an audience that we can appeal to extend our outreach in public education.

As a reminder, we have our quarterly Board of Directors meeting on Monday, March 30th, at Sandy Bottom at 7 PM. All of the Officers and Standing Committee Chairs are cordially invited. Everyone else is welcome to attend as well.

We have a lot coming up in the next couple of months, March TOTE Show, Board meeting, Annual Auction, and April TOTE Show. I am looking forward to seeing everyone and having a lot of fun.

Rock on,

-Walter

GMSVP CALENDAR

03/27-29/15—TOTE Show at Hampton Roads Convention Center

03/28/15—Morefield Mine Field Trip

03/30/15—GMSVP Board Meeting

04/02/15—GMSVP April Meeting and Auction

04/24-26/15—TOTE Show at VA Beach Convention Center

Special Points of Interest:

GMSVP Meetings, 7 PM
Sandy Bottom Nature Center; Hampton, VA
- Board Meeting, March 30th
- GMSVP Auction, April 2nd

T.G.M.S. Annual Auction March 20th, 7 PM
- St. Lukes United Methodist Church
- 3396 Stoneshore Rd, VA Beach, VA

Hampton TOTE Show
- Hampton Roads Convention Center
- March 27—29

Va Beach TOTE Show
- VA Beach Convention Center
- April 24 – 26

Wildacres Workshop
- Little Switzerland, NC
- May 18—24

William Holland Workshop
- Young Harris, GA
- June 7—13

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Treasures of the Earth Show—VOLUNTEERS NEEDED Dan Fontaine
Hampton Roads Convention Center, March 27—29, 2015

For the first time, a Treasures of the Earth (TOTE) Show is being held at the Hampton Roads Convention Center *(easy for our members to volunteer and attend)*. The TOTE Show is on March 27—29, 2015. GMSVP will once again have a booth with displays to educate the public 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, March 26th:**
  - ◊ **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 Hampton Roads Convention Center at 2 PM.
  - ◊ **2 PM:** Truck unloading and GMSVP booth/equipment setup. Booth and equipment setup takes about 3 hours; more volunteers, less time.
- **Friday, March 27th to Sunday, March 29th:** During the show, GMSVP booth/equipment has four areas that need manning: demonstrations, education/youth programs, geode/slab cutting, and sales.
- **Sunday, March 29th:**
  - ◊ 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.
- ***CONTACT ROBERT MAZZRILLO ASAP TO VOLUNTEER….AT SPAZZAGORILLA@YAHOO.COM.***

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 or by calling 757-465-5599.

Treasures of the Earth Show—VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Dan Fontaine

Virginia Beach Convention Center, April 24—26, 2015

GMSVP once again will have a booth at the Treasures of the Earth (TOTE) Show being held at the Virginia Beach Convention Center on April 24—26, 2015. Like at the March Hampton TOTE Show, GMSVP will have a booth with displays to educate the public about Virginia's natural resources and our club. Members also 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.

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- **Thursday, April 23rd:**
  - ◊ **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 PM:** Truck unloading and GMSVP booth/ equipment setup. Booth and equipment setup takes about 3 hours; more volunteers, less time.
- **Friday, April 24th to Sunday, April 26th:** During the show, GMSVP booth/equipment has four areas that need manning: demonstrations, education/youth programs, geode/slab cutting, and sales.
- **Sunday, April 26th:**
  - ◊ 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.
- ***Volunteer sign up can be done at the April 2nd GMSVP meeting or by contacting Robert Mazzrillo at spazzagorilla@yahoo.com.***

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 or by calling 757-465-5599.

The **Tidewater Gem and Mineral Society Annual Auction** is on Friday, March 20th at 7 PM at St. Lukes United Methodist Church, 3396 Stoneshore Rd, VA Beach, VA. The auction includes material from an old collection purchased from a former member and assorted rocks, opals, faceted stones, slabs, cabs, cutting rough, crystals, limonite pseudomorphs, jewelry findings and stands, decorative items, and much more. Equipment up for auction includes a small tumbler, triple balance beam, file cabinet, flat lap, ultrasonic cleaner, kiln, 8" saw, dop pot and station, homemade grinding/polishing machine with six 4" wheels, and centrifugal caster.

Pilgrimage to Tucson

Barbara & Walter Priest

We talked about going and talked about going and talked about going. I ran into my old roommate from VMI at our 45th Reunion last September. He lives in Tucson and invited us to visit. Say no more we were on our way.

Talk about overwhelming, the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show is nothing short of amazing, over 40 venues and 4500 vendors scattered helter-skelter over the City of Tucson. The venues ranged from the glitzy high end jewelry, the TOTE Shows on steroids, to motels that rent their rooms for dealers to set up displays to open air tent bazaars and everything in between.

We spent two days at the show. The first day we started with some of the high end shows at and near the Tucson Convention Center. Many of these shows are wholesale only and require a business license to enter. They were very nice but not what we were looking for. From there we gravitated across I-10 to four or five city blocks of motel rooms and tents filled with everything under the sun. There were huge displays of malachite, quartz crystals, amethyst geodes and fossils. There were also pallet after pallet of rough of every kind. I picked a nice piece of chevron amethyst from Brazil, blue chalcedony from Turkey and shattuckite from Namibia.

The second day we headed south to a different set of venues. First were two wholesale shows. These are setup in huge tents that stay up year round. The tents are huge, approximately 500' long by at least 150' wide, large enough to play a game of football inside. These shows were not unlike the TOTE Shows with huge selections of beads, cabs, jewelry and many, many other items from around the world. After Tucson, I believe there are more beads in the world than there are people. We picked up some nice kyanite and rhodocrosite cabs. I also found Barbara's birthday present, a beautiful larimar bracelet. Everything is sold by weight, even the bracelet.

We left these venues and headed for another international bazaar. It was a huge area of tents of every size and dimension. In the bazaars, everyone's money is welcome with no dealer's licenses required. It was quite literally international with vendors from Australia, Madagascar, Morocco, Mexico and everywhere in between. We had finally found the Mother Lode. There were rough, slabs, minerals and fossils mixed in with textiles, wooden products, carved onyx, brass items and lapidary equipment, even an international food court. Here we picked up some Chinese writing stone, rosetta picture stone, rainbow obsidian, zebra agate and petosky stone. We had finally run out of time and money, but it will be where we start when we go back next year to pick up where we left off. (Cont'd on pg 5)

Pilgrimage to Tuscon - More Pictures

Barbara & Walter Priest

TUCSON GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY

GMSVP Logo Decision at April Meeting

Dan Fontaine

The current logo was designed some time ago. The small file size is inadequate for use on posters, shirt patches, etc. We are fortunate to have a graphic designer, Kelly Mazzrillo, in our club. She offered to create a new graphic of the current logo as well as to design an updated logo.

The current and proposed new GMSVP logos developed by Kelly are shown to the right. **The club will vote at the April 2nd meeting whether to keep the current logo, migrate to the new logo, or keep both.** Once decided, the club will be positioned to have a quality logo to exhibit on shirts, posters, and other potential club products.

New GMSVP Members

Welcome new rockhounds!

Glenn Bittner & Jeff Sandmeier

VOLUNTEERS MAKE A GOOD CLUB GREAT! GET INVOLVED!

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

Safety Matters – Limiting Factors

Ellery Borow, EFMLS Safety Chair

Source: EFMLS News Vol 52, No. 5, March 2015

Speaking of safety matters - this time of year, and really any time of year, it is wise to mind ones limits. Safety has a great deal to do with ones personal limits. I know, people are pretty much going to do what they want to do and often simply ignore limits, but limits are often related to safety concerns.

From time to time one hears of a fellow out shoveling snow and having a heart attack. A heart attack could happen any time, but when one ignores their own personal limits it tends to, at times, tempt fate. If one is in a high risk group, say males of middle age and working out in the cold where the blood vessels are constricted in order to keep blood flow and warmth where it is most needed - in the core of the body - well, that is a limitation factor folks should well mind.

There are numerous additional limitation factors to mind in our hobby. Sure one can walk a 1/4 mile into a quarry, but one should be mindful that one will be walking out another 1/4 mile and this time, hopefully, carrying a pack or bucket of great, yet heavy minerals. What is your limit...walking 200 feet, 1,000 feet, 1/2 mile, two miles...and back? It is wise to know and mind ones own personal limits.

How does one know their limits? Truly, one would not want to set a personal limit too low since that would needlessly restrict doing things that one could indeed do. Then again, one would not want to set limits too lofty and possibly put oneself into a difficult situation.

If there are doctor-imposed limits of walking distance, those indeed should be prudent to respect. However, if limits are self-imposed, such limits could be more difficult to respect the extent of the limitation. Care and common sense should be the watchword of the day.

There are numerous personal limits we work with every day. How good is one's eyesight for a person faceting a stone? One would not want to make eyesight-related mistakes. How tired is one feeling? One would not want to experience a driving accident from being tired. How achy is one feeling? One would not want to be breaking a lot of rock and, due to ones feeling achy, keep missing the chisel with their hammer strikes, etc.

So, in this challenging time of year, and really every time of year, please pay attention and mind ones limits - minding the small thing of a limit could be your healthy choice.

'Nuff said for now. Please be safe within limits.

The Annual GMSVP Auction will be during the April 2nd Meeting! Come early to choose what you want to include in the auction.

If you have anything to donate to the auction, please bring it to the Hampton Roads Convention Center TOTE Show on March 27—29.

The March GMSVP Meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather. Therefore, no March minutes were prepared.

Fossil Preparation and Collections Symposium

North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences in Raleigh, NC

April 16-18, 2015

www.paleomethods.org

A Bit of Heaven on Earth

Steve Weinberger, EFMLS Wildacres Committee Chair

Source: EFMLS News Vol 52, No. 5, March 2015

We just returned from Tucson and the big gem and mineral shows. I can tell you honestly that living out there with 80 degree weather for two weeks was wonderful. I can also tell you that getting off the plane and finding ourselves faced with 15 degree temperature and ice and snow on our parked car was quite a shock! I can only imagine how those living in New England with all it's bitter cold and 7+ feet of snow must have felt upon their return.

Bob Jones

While enjoying all the wonderful gems and minerals in Tucson, we also had an opportunity to visit with our two Speakers-in-Residence for our EFMLS Wildacres Workshops. Both are excited to be coming once again...in fact, Bob Jones, the May 18 - 24 speaker has already given us the titles of his six talks for the week and Denise Nelson, the August 24 - 30 speaker, has already planned her talks as well. You're really in for a wonderful treat regardless of which session you can attend.

Denise Nelson

The chance for your club to win a scholarship to one of the 2016 Wildacres Workshop sessions is still on. Just send an e-mail a copy of your club bulletin containing a story about Wildacres (or a poem, or reprint of this article) and we'll give you one ticket per article for the drawing. The correct e-mail to use for the contest is <efmlswildacres@ gmail.com>. If you don't have e-mail, we'll accept your bulletin copies via "snail mail". In July we'll put all the tickets in a large container and select one as the 2016 scholarship recipient. If your club holds the winning ticket, you can decide who the lucky scholarship recipient is. Bulletins published between December 2014 and June 2015 are eligible. (Editor's Note: If GMSVP wins a free scholarship, it will be included in a future auction.)

During the week you'll have an opportunity to take either one class that lasts 4 days or two classes that each last 2 days. (Editor's Note: See last month's newsletter or the website below for a list of classes.)

Room and board along with gratuities, class instruction, six talks by our Speaker-in-Residence, and much, much more is only $390 per person! Materials fees for classes are extra and will vary depending on the class (or classes) you take. In addition to the classes and the talks by our Speakers - in - Residence, you'll participate in our tail-gate session, auction, and sharing session along with time to go on a field trip or explore the beautiful Little Switzerland area and much more.

In the meantime, send in your reservations for either the May or August sessions.

http://efmls-wildacres.org/

GMSVP PICNIC

May 16th at Sandy Bottom Nature Park's Lakeside Shelter

Watch for information in next month's newsletter! Add it to your calendar!

Bench Tips

Brad Simon

Source: Source: Chippers' Chatter Volume 65, Number 3, March 2015

Winding Jump Rings

Whenever you need a few jump rings the same size, it's easy to grab a round rod and wind as many as you need. But when you need a lot of them, some form of winder saves a lot of time. A variable speed screw gun makes quick work of winding the coils. Screw guns are quite inexpensive at discount stores and are remarkably handy for odd jobs in the shop and around the house.

To wind a coil, just bend a right angle on the end of the wire about a half inch long and insert this into the screw gun chuck. Then wind slowly, keeping a tight coil. I like to rest the end of the mandrel on the edge of the table or bench pin. Finally, one note of caution. If you are winding an entire length of wire, be careful as you get near the end of the wire. If the end passes under your thumb, it can cause a nasty scratch or cut.

Touching Up a Bezel

Pumice wheels are good for touching up a bezel after you've set the stone. The hardness is about 6 on the Moh's scale, less hard than quartz, so it shouldn't scratch any of your agates or jaspers. However, I'd avoid or be real careful of using pumice near the softer stones like turquoise, amber, howelite, etc.

If you're unsure about the hardness of your wheels, test them on a piece of glass. Glass is about 5 ½ on the Mohs scale, softer than quartz. So if the wheel doesn't harm glass, it's safe for use on the quartzes and harder stones.

My preference is the one inch diameter ones such as those shown at: riogrande.com/Product/AdvantEdge-Pumice-Wheels-Medium/332722?pos=2.

Annealing Thin Wire

Annealing fine wire can be tricky. For a good anneal, all areas of the wire must be heated uniformly to just barely red and then as it cools to black immediately quenched in water.

It's so easy to melt a section of the wire if you're heating with a torch. Avoid problems by winding the wire into a tight coil about two inches in diameter. Fasten the coil in two or three places with scrap wire.

I've found I can eliminate all risk of melting by using an oven set at about 1150 F. Place the coil of wire into the heated oven, let it soak for 5 minutes, and quench.

But if no oven is available, place the coil in a small covered metal can (like tuna fish comes in) or on a piece of copper or steel sheet and heat from the bottom.

The annual Aurora Fossil Festival this year is on May 22nd—24th. The festival features fine art, crafts, jewelry, clothing, accessories, pottery, photography, carnival rides and specialty foods. Have a great time searching for, collecting, and learning about fossils. The museum contains some very interesting displays.

Bring a garden trowel, sifter and plastic bags, spend the day collecting, and take home a piece of the past.

Check the April Newsletter for more information.

SNAKES, BEES AND SPIDERS…..OH MY!

Robert Mazzrillo

This article was developed using information from the following sources: Poisonous Spiders in Virginia By Michelle Z. Donahue, eHow Contributor, http://www.ehow.com/list_6151790_poisonous-spiders-virginia.html; Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife/problems/snakes/; About Bee and Wasp Stings, http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/wildlife/bees.htm; Pests of Homes, Structures, People, and Pets, http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7449.html; Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/plant&pest/fireant.shtml; and Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife/bear/black-bear-facts/.

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.

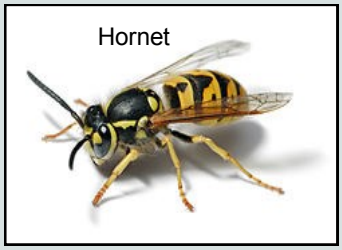
While the brown recluse has been reported in Virginia, sightings are extremely rare and, so far, confined to the western regions of the state. The brown recluse is light to chocolate brown in color, has three pairs of eyes arranged in a triad of three pairs which is one of the main diagnostic features 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 (Cont’d on Pg 10)

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 cross-bands 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; 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, theses 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

(Cont'd on pg 11)

SNAKES, BEES AND SPIDERS…..OH MY! (Cont'd)

Robert Mazzrillo

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 assuring voice.

Be aware of what might be living all around you when you are collecting! Ensure the people you are collecting with know the hazards that might be present in the area. Stay safe, have fun!

March Birthstones

B. Jay Bowman

Source: Chippers' Chatter Volume 65, Number 3, March 2015

The list of birthstones that was approved by the Jewelers Association in 1912 gave five of the months two birthstones. March is one of those months. Bloodstone is one of the gems for March and Aquamarine is the other.

Bloodstone is a cryptocrystalline variety of Quartz. Chacedony, although properly only belonging to some of the varieties is generally used to describe all varieties of cryptocrystalline Quartz. The hardness is just under 7 and specific gravity is around 2.60. The refractive index is 1.535 to 1.539. Chalcedony has no cleavage and the natural luster is dull to waxy.

Bloodstone is semi-translucent, dark green with red spots, and not generally confused with any other gemstone. The stone is also known as heliotrope. It is unique in that it is always the same color with the only variation being the number and size of the red spots.

Bloodstone lore includes the belief that the wearer can become invisible. This characteristic is mentioned by Dante in his *Inferno* and it is also mentioned in the *Decameron* by Boccaraccuo. It has been said to stop nosebleeds and other bleeding and is also good against poisons. It has also been said the Heliotrope can guard the wearer against harm and to make the wearer loyal and true.

Bloodstone got it's name in legend when a Roman soldier jammed a spear into Christ and some of the blood dropped on some jasper at the base of the cross. The name Heliotrope comes from the Greek *helios* meaning sun and *trope*, a word for stone. It takes a very good polish and according to Greek legend would reflect the sun better than any other stone.

The second stone for March is the Aquamarine. A member of the beryl family of minerals, Aquamarine is a greenish blue to light blue gem that gets its color from traces of iron within it. Beryl is Beryllium aluminum silicate. It is in the hexagonal crystal system and has a hardness of 7.5 to 8 with no cleavage. It has a refractive index of 1.56 to 1.602 which is rather low. Aqua was thought to protect sailors from harm at sea especially if the stones were engraved with figures of Poseiden. Christian lore said it controlled the passions and signified moderation.

In recent months some jewelers have been advertising "white aquamarine". Colorless beryl (Goshanite) is plentiful and generally cheap, but by calling it white aquamarine (a contradiction in terms since aquamarine is also a recognized color), the jeweler can charge more for it. It is similar to calling Red Beryl "Red Emerald" which many jewelers did when it first appeared on the scene.

So March birthday celebrants have two different stones having two different qualities and appearances. Generally Aqua is pushed more for the ladies and Bloodstone geared more towards the gentlemen.

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 of 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.