



THE VIRGINIA PEN



GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY OF THE VIRGINIA PENINSULA

March 2016



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Sara Phillips

Special Points of Interest:

GMSVP Monthly Meeting

- April 7th, 7 PM
- Program: Auction
- Sandy Bottom Nature Park's Nature Center
ALL WELCOME!

Fossil Collecting Field Trip

- Saturday, April 2nd
- 9 AM until dark
- Pipsico Boy Scout Camp Reservation, 57 Pipsico Road, Spring Grove, VA

Treasures of the Earth (TOTE) Show

- April 29th—May 1st
- VA Beach Convention Ctr

GMSVP Picnic & Lapidary Equipment Auction

- Saturday, May 21st
- Sandy Bottom Nature Park's Lakeside Pavilion

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What's up fellow Rockhounds? GMSVP rocks the HOUSE!!! We are on the cusp of spring, and it's time for GMSVP to spring into action with our Spring Auction. Yes, that's right! I am excited to announce that we will have many items for bid at our auction coming up at our next membership meeting on April 7th. This is a great way to expand your rock and mineral, fossil, and jewelry collection and help out our club's funds at the same time.

Kim Stone gave a presentation on gold prospecting at our meeting on March 3rd – Thanks to Kim for a great presentation!! I personally have tried looking for gold, but it didn't pan out.... How do you turn soup into gold? You add 24 carrots!! (Just a little gold humor there!)

Nelsonite was recently named the official state rock of Virginia. This is very exciting! For those of you who are not familiar with Nelsonite, it's named for Nelson County, Virginia (where it was first found) and is commonly referred to as "Titanium Ore." Its primary mineral components are apatite (light colored mineral-typically white, and non-metallic) and ilmenite (black, opaque, and metallic). Congratulations Virginia on having a state rock!

It's that time of year where we can gear up for field trips and collecting. We have a local fossil collecting field trip coming up on Saturday April 2nd. Please contact me for more information. Weekly e-mail blasts will be sent to everyone. I encourage everyone to go on this trip, even if you are new to the club. (Cont'd on next page.)

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; provide the community with a knowledge of the hobby through lectures, demonstrations, and exhibitions; and 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: Individual \$15, Couple \$20, and Family \$25. Dues information is under: [Documents and Membership Information on the GMSVP Website Homepage.](#)

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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President's Corner (Cont'd)

Sara Phillips

(Cont'd from prior page) This is a twice a year event – so if you cannot attend next month, you will have another opportunity at the end of October.

Fun Mineral Fact: Aquamarine is the traditional birthstone for the month of March, and is a light blue to light blue-green color variety of the mineral Beryl. The green variety of Beryl is commonly known as Emerald and the pale yellow to yellowish orange color variety of Beryl is commonly known as Heliodor.

Have a Gneiss Day!!! Sara Beth

Gold Prospecting March Program Summation

Kim Stone

The program highlighted methods for gold prospecting gold, which included: panning, sluicing, high banking, dredging, and metal detecting. It all depends on what your wallet can afford. Now that you have the general idea, where can you go from there? Do some research on the area and maybe join a gold prospecting club. Some links to explore include:

- GPAA: <http://www.goldprospectors.org>. Membership includes: mining guild, magazine, newspaper and wealth of info on gold.
- Felix Pay Dirt: <http://www.felixpaydirt.com>. A bag of gold pay dirt that you can pan for fun.
- <http://www.publiclandsforthepeople.org>. Keeping the public land open for mining and prospecting.
- Gold Rush Expedition: <http://goldrushexpeditions.com>. When you just want to buy a mine of your very own.
- Virginia Dept. of Mines, Minerals and Energy: <https://www.dmme.virginia.gov>. This is a site that you can go to to see all the mines and minerals of Virginia.



I have gotten the go ahead to go dredging on someone's farmland. I need to work out the details with the club for a field trip. I will bring out the 2-inch dredge and show folks on the field trip how we set it up, run it, and do a final clean out.

I will be doing a Gold Part 2, so keep a eye in a future newsletter for the details. Gold is a great way to get outdoors, enjoy something that made history, and maybe take some of it home with you. If anyone has any questions, wants to know more, wishes to see if the river or stream on their land might have gold in it, contact me at: Kim Stone at: phone 860-235-8851 or e-mail kneptune19961@gmail.com.

See the GMSVP Minutes for committee reports.

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April 7th Meeting Program—Annual Auction

Walter Priest



The April 7th meeting features the GMSVP's annual auction. As always, guests are welcome to attend the auction and bid on the items.

The purpose of the auction is to provide access to some lovely specimens for your collection and/or other materials to support your lapidary activities. Additionally,

the auction replaces club funds used to purchase estate specimens and to help fund future club activities.

Sixteen GMSVP volunteers recently met to sort through specimens that our club has received (donated or purchased) over the past year or so. The specimens were sorted into choice items (slabs, specimens, and rough) to include in the annual auction, boxes of mid-grade specimens to be given to our members at a later date, and other "junk" rocks that were either taken home by our volunteers participating in the sorting or dumped.



Auction Process at the April Meeting:

- Specimens will be displayed on a side table labeled with their identification, if known, and an initial bid price.
- Please make a note for yourself with the description of the item of interest as the bidding can get hectic. There will be a limited number of pens/pencils/cards/paper available to record your items. We encourage members to bring your own recording supplies.
- Move any of the specimens that you would like to bid to the table at the front.
- Get a bidding number "card" for your family from the other front table.
- Each item on the front table will be held up for bids by a club member acting as auctioneer. The winning bid will be recorded by the treasurer and a team of members. The specimen will be given to the winning member or guest.
- Our club treasurer, Gary Bergtholdt, will keep a running total of successful bids by family bidding number. All members and guests must see Gary before leaving to pay for their items. Cash, check, and (hopefully) credit cards will be accepted.

Come to the auction, check out the items, and be prepared to be tempted!

Reminder - the lapidary equipment auction will be at the May GMSVP Picnic.



Gold Panning Opportunity in Virginia

Kim Stone

I was doing some more research on gold panning in Virginia and came across the Lake Anna State Park (Spotsylvania County, VA) website: (http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/lake-anna#general_information). The park offers camping, picnicking, cabins, more than 15 miles of trails for hiking, biking, horseback riding, fishing, and swimming. Visitor center exhibits trace the history of the area's gold mining and highlight the park's natural features. It is about a 2-1/2 hour drive from Hampton Roads.

The Stampmill Sam's Gold Adventure at the park can be a fun family outing or possibly an interesting field trip for our club members. Stampmill Sam's Gold Adventure provides an setting to follow in the footsteps of "Stampmill Sam." You can visit the Goodwin Gold Mine and discover how gold was mined in Virginia in the late 1800's and then pan for gold on the shores of Pigeon Run Creek. Space is limited, and pre-registration is required. The fee is \$2 each or \$6 per family. Click on the [link for information about available dates and activities](#).



GMSVP has a booth at the Treasures of the Earth (TOTE) Show being held at the Virginia Beach Convention Center on April 29th to May 1st. 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 way to increase awareness of our club and gain new members.



Volunteers are needed for the following 2 to 3-hour TOTE Show shifts and can sign up at the April 7th meeting or by contacting Bill Neff at: neff29464@gmail.com or (843) 697-3373.



- Person-In-charge of shifts—Bill Neff
- Booth shifts
- Rock saw shifts
- Transportation and loading shifts

Schedule:

- **Thursday, April 28th:**
 - ◇ **1 PM:** Volunteers 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.
 - ◇ **2:30 PM:** Truck unloading and GMSVP booth/equipment setup. Booth and equipment setup takes about 3 hours; more volunteers, less time.
- **Friday, April 29th to Sunday May 1st:** During the show, GMSVP booth/equipment have four areas that need manning: demonstrations, education/youth programs, geode/slab cutting, and sales. Please let Bill Neff know which activity and day you can support; no experience is necessary (training is available).
- **Sunday, May 1st at 5 PM:**
 - ◇ 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.



While any GMSVP member may use the club’s equipment, priority will be given to volunteers at the show. Club members will be available to provide training on equipment’s proper use and safety for new rockhounds. Volunteers will have ample time to also see the show. 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 Bill Neff at: neff29464@gmail.com or (843) 697-3373.

PLEASE CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING AS A PEBBLE PUPS CO-LEADER. *I'm honored to be able to help the club continue to provide the Pebble Pups program. I truly believe that the kids are the future and their understanding of things around them will also shape it. I would appreciate assistance with the program, as I have gotten busier with building, kids Scouts, and sailing. The assistance can be just background research or getting some lapidary craft or games put together.*

WOW, April 2016 is already approaching. Plans are always good to keep us on track, especially in our busy lives. So far we had: January—Chris Young to teach the “Special Effects” of rocks and minerals; February—a game of “Treasure Trove,” learning about worldly treasures; and March—played a vocabulary game, learned about gold and witnessed the gold panning demonstration by Kim Stone; blue index cards were distributed, ask the kids. Moving forward, there are hopes of doing the following: (May during picnic) Gold rush GPS, (June) lapidary arts, (July) stone tools, (August) lesson to be determine-TBD, (September-Picnic) Lapidary project, (November) TBD, and (December) Game. Oh, don't forget the field trips. Its the chance to add to a rock collection or just fun prospecting. Soooo, please signup the kids when I send out “SignupGenius” for the Pebble Pups activities so we may plan materials accordingly. Thanks!

TREASURE TRADES

- WANTED: Organizer for gold panning field trip in Virginia for Pebble Pups. Contact other clubs/members and or research permissible location. Contact Christine at 757-725-2876
- WANTED: Flint Napper expertise, to share "how to" with Pebble Pups. Sample tool making rocks/minerals. Contact Christine at: 757-725-2876
- TRADES: Rocks from another state



GMSVP Property Manager—OPEN

Sara Phillips

Please let Sara Phillips (sphillips@ecslimited.com) know as soon as possible, if you are interested in the property manager position.

Our GMSVP Property Manager, Hank Woods, will be moving back to his family in Texas. Hank has been our property manager for a number of years. While we will miss his knowledge of gems and minerals and our club's equipment, we will miss his friendship most of all. We certainly wish Hank safe travels and only good gems and minerals.

Hank's departure leaves GMSVP in need of a volunteer to take over the duties of GMSVP property manager. The property manager is an essential position, i.e., GMSVP needs an orderly and well maintained shed and well maintained and operational rock polishing and cutting equipment to support our club activities.

Hank summarized his duties as follows: “In the beginning the job was to repair equipment, as needed, to keep it running but has since expanded. After I took the job, I found that no one knew what equipment we had. I developed an inventory of equipment owned by the club; the inventory will be passed to the new property manager.”

The basic duties include: keep an inventory of club assets; repair equipment as necessary; order repair parts for equipment; order other equipment as the board directs; order geodes as directed; arrange for equipment delivery to and from the TOTE Shows (rent and drive the truck); serve on the board of directors; and assist members in the repair of their equipment.





In recent days I've spoken to a number of people who tell me that they plan on attending Wildacres this year. "Have you sent in your registration form yet?", I ask. "Not yet" is too often the reply. If you're like the people I'm referring to, my question is : **"What are you waiting for?"**

We've put together what I think are two dynamite sessions for 2016. The first, May 9 – 15, features Helen Serras-Herman as our "speaker in residence." Helen is a world renowned glyptographer (gem stone carver); a terrific, knowledgeable speaker; and a darn nice lady. She'll present several programs during the session which are sure

to be of interest to everyone. Her images are always great too. (Take a look at examples of Helen's amazing work on her website (www.gemartcenter.com)).

The second session, September 5 – 11, will feature Alfredo Petrov as the "speaker in residence." Alfredo has travelled the world and is extremely knowledgeable about minerals. Most recently, Alfredo has been honored by having a new mineral, Alfredopetrovite, named after him. He's a charming and interesting fellow and his photographs and tales about his travels are amazing.

There's nothing like a week at the Wildacres Retreat.

Our sessions are always relaxing and enjoyable and

you're sure to come away with new skills learned during class, new friendships made, and a better appreciation for our hobby. **So...What are you waiting for?**

Tuition for the entire week is \$400 per person including room and board, gratuity for the Retreat employees, and instruction given by our outstanding cadre of teachers. The only extra charge is for the materials that you use in the class or classes you take. Meals are wholesome and tasty, rooms comfortable, the air unpolluted, and the camaraderie among participants always terrific. **So...What are you waiting for?**

Everything you may want to know about the EFMLS Wildacres Workshops are contained in the following links. Come and join the fun at Wildacres in 2016!

<http://efmls-wildacres.org/page9/index.html>

LIST OF SPRING CLASSES:

<http://efmls-wildacres.org/page10/index.html>

LIST OF FALL CLASSES:

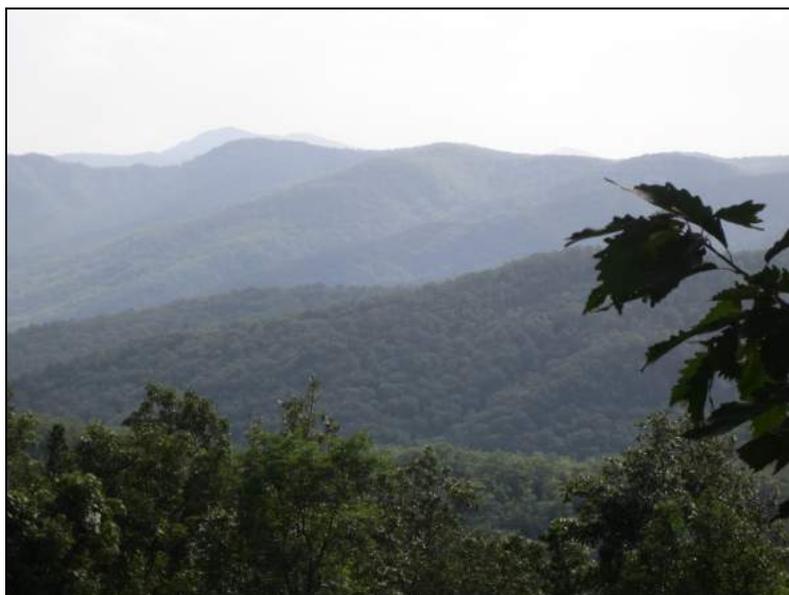
<http://efmls-wildacres.org/page5/index.html>

REGISTRATION FORM:

<http://efmls-wildacres.org/styled-7/index.html>

DIRECTIONS:

<http://efmls-wildacres.org/styled-6/index.html>



The Emerald is part of the Beryl Family of Minerals. It is double refractive and has refractive indexes of 1.577 and 1.583. Specific gravity of Emerald is 2.72. The dispersion is quite low.

There is probably as much lore about Emeralds as any other stone. Maybe more. It was believed that the Emerald could foretell future events. Emeralds could forestall all enchantments and incantations. Magicians found it impossible to work with an Emerald in the vicinity. The Emerald could help one to strengthen ones memory or become an eloquent speaker. It could tell if ones lover was true or not. The Emerald supposedly had another attribute when it came to love, which was to block sexual passion. Legend has it that a king of Hungary had an exceptional Emerald set in a ring and when he embraced his wife the Emerald broke into three pieces. It was also said that because the Emerald quickened the mind and made one more intelligent that it also made them more honest.

The Emerald was used as an antidote for poisons and demonical possession. It was said to cure dysentery, fever and epilepsy; however, if the epilepsy was too much for the Emerald to cure, then it would shatter when worn. Pliny said the Emerald was the only gemstone that could delight the eye without fatiguing it. If one were to tire ones eyes by gazing intently at other objects, then looking at an Emerald would renew the strength of the eyes. Gem engravers were said to keep Emeralds on hand to look at occasionally in order to rest their eyes from the tedious work. Nero is said to have had an Emerald set in a setting that he could look through at the sights of Rome because it made them look so much better.

At the time of the Spanish conquest of Peru, many large and valuable Emeralds were stolen by the Spanish and were forever lost because many of the soldiers believed that a true gemstone would not break, and they tested these by placing them on an anvil and hitting them with a hammer. Needless to say they were very unhappy with the green powder that was left.

Even in ancient times the Emerald was treated with oil so “the luster would not be lost.”

This natal stone of May is found in many countries of the world with some debate about where the best quality comes from. Fine Emeralds have been found in North Carolina, Russia and other places but it is probably true that the more really fine Emeralds come from Columbia than anywhere else.

Bibliography:

- Anna S. Sofianides and George E. Harlow; (1990) Gems & Crystals From the Museum of Natural History; Simon & Schuster, New York, NY
- George Frederick Kunz, (Reprint 1989) The Curious Lore of Precious Stones; Bell Publishing Company, New York, NY



*Emerald
Muzo Mine, Mun. de Muzo
Boyacá Dept. Columbia
Photo: Diego Acosta*



Let's celebrate! The Hawks family has grown (6th grandchild). Larry and Brenda Hawks' youngest son and daughter-in-law, Nick and Stacie, had a baby girl on March 4th. Paislee Anne was 7lbs 13oz and 20 1/2" long. Mommy and baby are doing fine!

Beware of Nature's Hazards—Annual Reminder

Robert Mazzrillo

Source: 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://anr.ext.wvu.edu/bees/stings>; Pests of Homes, Structures, People, and Pets, <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7449.html>; Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, www.vdacs.virginia.gov/plant&pest/fireant; 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 the next page)



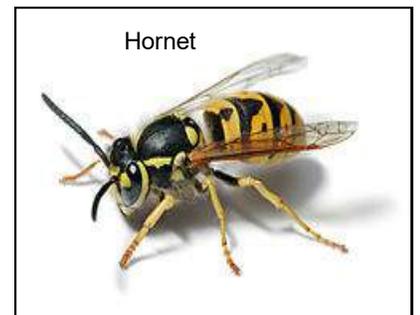
(Cont'd from prior page) pattern throughout Virginia. This snake is found statewide, in a wide variety of terrestrial habitats, including wetlands, forests, fields, and edge areas of all types. The copperhead is found in open areas with higher rock densities, and uses all types of structures for cover, 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!



Hornet



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

The counties affected by Fire Ants in Virginia are James City and York and cities of Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach and Williamsburg.

Bear sightings are becoming common throughout much of Virginia. Adult black bears are approximately

(Cont'd on next page)

(Cont'd from prior page) 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!

Safety Matters – Give Yourself a Hand

Ellery Borow, AFMS Safety Chair

Source: A.F.M.S. Newsletter, Volume 69, Number 4, March 2016



Give yourself a hand, or at least a rousing round of applause if you are one of the many folks who makes a concerted effort to take care of one of your most important tools --your hands.

There are many folks who earn their living through constant use of their hands. Even if you are not one of those fortunate folks, it is likely that your hands are in constant use. If you think that you are one of the folks who does not use their hands all that much, try going even 1/2 an hour with one hand held behind your back and then going on about your day. The hand behind ones back suggestion might clearly highlight how much we use our hands. If you are still unsure of the amount of your hand usage, try going even 10 minutes without use of either one. Our hands are important, give yourself some applause if you take care of your valuable asset --hands.

Using my trusted, well worn, and tattered, 15th edition of Gray's Anatomy I found the Metacarpus, Carpus, Scaphoid, Cuneiform, Ulna, Radius and 22 other bones of the forearm, wrist, palm and fingers. Counting the bones of the right and left hands that's 60 bones of the body's 200 or so bones. The hands have a high percentage of the body's total bone count and ancillary tissues. It behooves us to take good care of these assets. By being good I do not mean just use of an occasional hand lotion. Indeed, hands do not deserve just good care, they deserve great care.

Soon I will transition from winter's snow shoeing enjoyments to Spring's bicycle riding pleasures. During that transition I will move from using certain muscle/bone groups to other muscle/bone groups. During that transition I will awaken muscles I have not used in a while. If I do not properly prepare for the transition, I will be sore in places. What that demonstrates to me is that I'm not exercising all of me sufficiently well. The same goes for hands. For the hand tasks we do frequently, we keep well exercised, for movements we seldom do, the muscles weaken.

(Cont'd on next page)

We, on occasion, do bad things to our hands. I have had days when I'm using my rock hammer so much that, at the end of the day, my fingers have frozen in the curl of my hammer handle. When I pull the hammer from my hand my fingers stay frozen in the curl – that is not a good sign. What I should have done would have been to change activity and finger position frequently over the course of the day.

One other way we are bad to our hands is, and this is a really bad one that I have seen innumerable rockhounds do, hold a rock in one hand and, using the rock hammer held in the other hand, strike the rock. This activity sends shivers down my spine when I think of all the small bones in the wrist being whacked by a hammer. After all, just about all of the striking force goes through the rock and into the bones and connective tissues of the hand. Just ask any orthopedic surgeon what they think of such an activity, and I'm sure you will get an earful of commentary about the un-wiseness of the act.

Next, for hand calamities, we see the all-too-common near misses of the hammer aiming for the end of the chisel. Ever seen one of those? They are not pretty – and I'm not talking about the resultant air turning a blueish color. Hands do not have an easy life!

What is a hand to do? Yes, lotion for hands is good, but lotion will not help a missed hammer strike on a chisel (or thumb). There are (a ta-da moment) hammer guards available for chisels. A guard on the end of a chisel really can help prevent hand damage during a misplaced hammer strike. There are also numerous chisel holding devices available. There is a plethora of styles, compositions, and sizes of gloves that can prevent the many scratches, scrapes, and cuts we receive on our hands. We have available to us really great holding devices that can support/hold a rock so that it is not held in ones hand to be struck by a hammer. There are many devices and programs that can help stretch, exercise, strengthen, and increase flexibility of our hands. Although I would mention here that some of the exercise devices I have seen for strengthening ones hand can sometimes do more harm than good if used improperly -- so if in doubt about any program or device please consider consulting with a professional. Oh and hand lotion is indeed good for hands to maintain sensitivity, grip, epidermal integrity, and so on.

Other general hand maintenance guidelines include watching out for too many repetitive motions, avoiding shocks to the delicate hands and fingers, and taking a break from heavy hand usage tasks. I have even seen issues with too firm a grip for too long a time with hands holding on to dop sticks being used by those dedicated cabbers among us. When tackling a big job, ask for a hand. A helping hand to share a load, or relieve a stress sure can help keep our hands healthy.

With proper maintenance our hands can last a lifetime -- and that is good for the hobby as well as the individual. So, please keep up the good work and give yourself a hand for a job well done. Be safe, stay safe.



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

New GMSVP Members—Welcome New Rockhounds!

Greg & Jane Bodensick
Dale Hetherington
Carol McDowell

Michael, Ruth, Nichole, & Paige Nix
James Robertson & Rania Zada

Field Trip—Miocene and Pliocene Fossil Collection along the James River (near Surry, VA)

Please let Sara Phillips (SPhillips@ecslimited.com), if you would like to attend this field trip.

Date: Saturday, April 2nd

Time: 9 AM until dark (Note: High tide; 7:52 AM; low tide is 2:46 PM.)

Location: Pipsico Boy Scout Camp Reservation, 57 Pipsico Road, Spring Grove, Virginia

The Mountain Area Gem and Mineral Association (M.A.G.M.A.) has invited GMSVP to participate in another field trip at the Pipsico Boy Scout Camp Reservation near Surry, VA. Collecting will only be allowed on Saturday, April 2nd.

Campers may arrive on Friday night, October 30th. There are cabinettes available with electricity but no running water. Three cabins are available with full facilities. Tent camping is also allowed. Tents may be set up in campsite 4. There are latrine facilities and water on the site. Showers may be available at the pool area. All overnight campers must exit the camp by 9 AM, April 4th.

Details: Rockhounds will experience easy collecting along nearly a 1-mile long riverbank and shoreline of molluscan fossils of Miocene and Pliocene epochs, shark teeth, whale bones, corals and more.

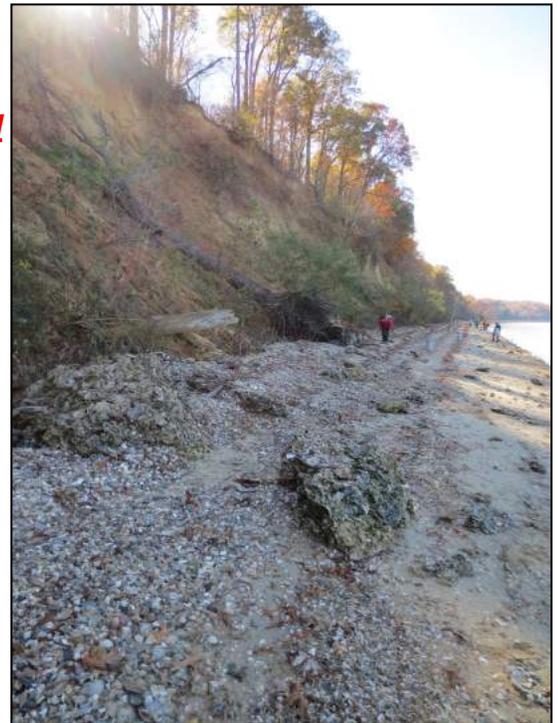
Sunblock and bug spray are highly recommended, as well as bottles of water and snacks. Please bring your own bags and tools for collecting.

Collecting Rules: All previous collecting rules still apply.

- Everyone must sign a liability release form upon arrival.
- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited on the property.
- Parking in designated areas only. No parking of vehicles in the campsites. You must park in the parking area after unloading gear.
- No climbing steep bank areas.
- Hand tools only.
- Swimming is prohibited in the river.
- No pets.

Fees:

- \$5.00 per person to collect or tent camp
- Cabin Rental: \$75
- Cabinette Rental: \$20



Gem & Mineral Society of the Virginia Peninsula (GMSVP):

- Fossil Field Trip: April 2nd, 9 AM until dark, Pipsico Boy Scout Camp Reservation, 57 Pipsico Road, Spring Grove, VA
- Board Meeting: April 4th, 7 PM, Sandy Bottom Nature Park's Nature Center, Hampton, VA
- April Meeting & Annual Auction (Slabs, Specimens, and Rough): April 7th, 7 PM, Sandy Bottom Nature Park's Nature Center, Hampton, VA
- Treasures of the Earth (TOTE) Show: April 29th—May 1st, Virginia Beach Convention Center, VA Beach, VA
- Spring Picnic & Equipment Auction: May 21st, 10 AM—4 PM, Sandy Bottom Nature Park's Lakeside Pavilion, Hampton, VA

Tidewater Gem and Mineral Society (TGMS): St. Luke's United Methodist Church (3396 Stoneshore Rd., Virginia Beach, VA

- Rock Swap, Saturday, June 18th, 10 AM—4 PM

Sterling Hill Field Trip

Sara Phillips, GMSVP Field Trip Coordinator

PLEASE SEND SARA PHILLIPS AN EMAIL (SPHILLIPS@ECSLIMITED.COM) BY MARCH 31ST AND LET HER KNOW IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN THIS TRIP .

Sterling Hill Mining Museum and Fluorescent Mineral Collecting – 7.5 hours drive from Sandy Bottom Nature Park

Possible field trip one of the last two weekends in July. I need 15 people committed to this field trip to get the group rate. Field trip will happen rain or shine. Rain will cancel the mineral collecting portion of the field trip.

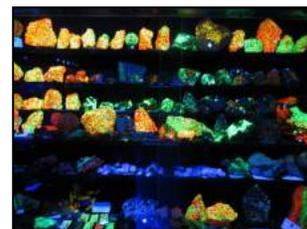
Location: The Sterling Hill Mining Museum, 30 Plant Street Ogdensburg, NJ 07439

Details: Group tour of the mine is \$11 per adult, \$10 for seniors, and \$8 for children ages 4-12 years. Guided tours last about two hours and include one hour in the underground zinc mine, half an hour in our large exhibit hall, and about 10 minutes in our museum of fluorescence. Mineral collecting fee for the Mine Run Dump is \$5 per person and is \$1.50 per pound for what you actually take out. The mine is a constant 56 degrees Fahrenheit, so please dress accordingly.

For the Mine Run Dump - bring sturdy footwear, a strong hammer (carpenter's claw hammers not allowed), and eye protection. A dark room with a shortwave ultraviolet light is provided on-site for inspection of fluorescent minerals. Fine specimens of zinc ore, consisting of variable proportions of brown willemite, red zincite, black franklinite, and white calcite, can be collected on the dump with ease. Much of the willemite and calcite are brightly fluorescent, green and red respectively. Fluorescent sphalerite is commonly found as well, fluorescing variably orange, pink, or blue.

White calcite marble from a nearby excavation contains pale blue-fluorescing diopside and yellow-fluorescing norbergite. Also found here are some of the rare species that made Sterling Hill famous as a mineral locality, but please note that these minerals are not called "rare" for nothing.

For more information: <http://sterlinghillminingmuseum.org/>



Fairy Stone State Park – a Fun Family Outing

Dan Fontaine

References: http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/fairy-stone#general_information; Shellie Ann Blog editor for Virginia State Parks - <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/blog/fabulous-fairy-stones-4417>

It is amazing that after living in Virginia for 44 years, there are state parks that we haven't visited. At our last meeting, Anthony Hubbard told me about his visit to Fairy Stone State Park in western Virginia and gave me a few of the stones that he collected. The park has cabins, a campground, group camping, an equestrian campground, a conference center, hiking trails, lake swimming, rowboats, canoes, paddle boats, kayaks, picnicking, and two playgrounds.



Fairy Stones are most commonly shaped like St. Andrew's cross, an "X," but may also be "T" shaped Roman crosses and square Maltese crosses. Superstition is that the crosses protect the wearer from witchcraft, sickness, accidents and disaster.

Fairy stones are staurolite, a combination of silica, iron and aluminum. Staurolite crystallizes at 60 or 90 degree angles, hence the stone's cross-like structure. Staurolite was formed during the rise of the Appalachian Mountains.

You can pick up a brochure at the gate to the park that has descriptions of the fairy stones, the legend, and also directions to this hunting ground on VA-57.



Minutes for the General Meeting of March 4th

Pat Fontaine

- The meeting was brought to order at 7:10 PM by Treasurer Gary Bergtholdt at Sandy Bottom Nature Center.
- Gary welcomed new members. He also thanked all members who volunteered at the TOTE show in February.
- Kelly Mazzrillo was unable to attend tonight's meeting, but she will report on the quotes for printing tee shirts next month.
- Gary informed us that the club has received a donation of a vibrating lap and some rock and mineral specimens from former member, Rudy Goodrich.
- First Vice President Brenda Hawks reported that we have 114 members currently.
- Second Vice President Michael Griffith reported that the April meeting will be our annual auction. The spring picnic will take the place of the usual May meeting. And the speaker for the June meeting will be Bob Simon of Dino Safari.
- Secretary Pat Fontaine indicted that the minutes for the February 4, 2016 meeting were published in the newsletter. Also, as Hospitality Chair, she thanked members for bringing such a nice variety of dishes to tonight's meeting. The main entree for the April meeting will be pizza. Members may bring the pizza (or other food) of their choice. If they prefer, they may choose to contribute \$10 for the purchase of a 16" pizza from Anna's restaurant. Pat will pick up all Anna's pizzas the night of the meeting. See Pat or Dan Fontaine if you would like them to get a pizza from Anna's.
- Treasurer Gary Bergtholdt reported our financial status. He indicated that we had very high sales of geodes, one of the best shows ever. He will inventory the remaining geodes and order more geodes for the next TOTE show, if necessary.

(Cont'd on next page)



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- Gary also described the auction process for the April meeting. He asked for volunteers to serve as auctioneers and to help set up and assist in other ways.
- Gary reminded us that fossil hunting field trips at Pipsico have been scheduled for April 2nd and October 28th of this year. If you would be interested in participating in an additional field trip to Sterling Hill, NJ (fluorescents and fossils) sometime this summer, please let Sara Phillips know by the end of this month.
- Any member interested in Silver Fabrication classes, please contact Anthony Hubbard.
- Gary reminded us that we still need someone to volunteer to be Property Manager and someone to lead the Pebble Pups. Christine invited members to share their knowledge with the Pebble Pups.
- Tote Chair Bill Neff thanked everyone who participated in the very successful show at the Hampton Convention Center last month. He stressed that we have another show coming up in April at the Virginia Beach Convention Center, so please plan to assist in some way.
- Webmaster Holly Worsham informed us of some changes to the website. She also reported that our old website has won second place in the Southeastern Federation competition. She has submitted our new website to the Eastern Federation 2016 competition.
- Editor Dan Fontaine thanked everyone for their comments, which will help him improve the newsletter. He reported that Seth Hempley's award-winning article will be published nationally in the SCRIBE newsletter.
- The business meeting was adjourned at 7:40 PM, so we could enjoy Kim Stone's presentation and demonstration on recreational gold mining.
- Following the presentation, the monthly raffle winners were chosen.

Minutes prepared by Pat Fontaine

March 5, 2016

/original signed/

Gem Tree Workshop

Gary Bergtholdt is holding 2-3 hour gem tree workshops at his home. If interested, contact Gary at: gbergtholdt@gmail.com.



2016 Show Dates

Virginia Beach Convention Center

Apr 29 - May 1; Jul 15 - 17; & Oct 14 - 16



GMSVP March Meeting
Thursday, April 7th, 7 PM
Program: GMSVP Auction

Sandy Bottom Nature Center
Hampton, VA Enter from Big Bethel Road
(Gate will be left open)

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.