



THE VIRGINIA PEN

GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY OF THE VIRGINIA PENINSULA



January 2018

President's Corner

Vinton Feanny

Special Points of Interest:

- GMSVP Member Meeting, Feb 1, 7 PM
- TOTE Show, Mar 9-11
- Pipsico Fossil Field Trip, Apr 7

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Happy New Year to all! I trust everyone had a wonderful Holiday.

It will be an honor to serve as your new President. Thanks to all the Board members who were willing to serve another term and Walter Priest for being our new VP Membership. Welcome to our new Hospitality Committee Chair, Brigitta Haggins, and Tom Meyers, our new Property Committee Chair. Many thanks also to Pat Fontaine, our past Hospitality Committee Chair, for the last few years.

Additionally, I should mention our gratitude to Walter and Barbara Priest for continuing to bring us drinks and ice.

My journey into rocks and gold panning came from watching the Gold Rush and Prospectors television series. While I sat on my couch, I dreamed of hitting the motherlode myself, finding topaz, amazonite, and aquamarine. As I dreamed, I realized retirement was coming up and I would finally have time to explore something new. My daughter said: "Join a rock club, Mommy." I searched and discovered GMSVP! I attended a meeting, met club members, joined, went on a few field trips over the next two years, and never looked back. I was hooked! I have yet to find that special stone, but I'm still dreaming.

2018 will bring many new adventures for our members. We will have an auction, a rock swap, two picnics with access to lapidary equipment, three Treasures of the Earth (TOTE) Shows with access to lapidary equipment, field trips, and programs at our monthly meetings. We already have a field trip planned for (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)

Vinton Feanny

(Cont'd from prior page.) April 7th to collect Miocene and Pliocene fossils at the Pipsico Scout Reservation in Surry County, VA.

Unfortunately, Mary Hood had to step down as our Field Trip Coordinator due to a heavy college course load. Fortunately, it provides an opportunity for one of our members to take over this important role. All you need is a love of field trips to lead this important committee. Our more experienced members will help mentor you!

We will have a booth at the TOTE Shows. The shows are in March, July, and October at the Virginia Beach Convention Center. GMSVP's booth will have 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 that GMSVP members cut with our rock saws. These shows also are a great way to increase awareness and gain new club members. Your help will make these shows a success!

Don't forget about the great opportunity to attend lapidary workshops at Wildacres and William Holland. It is a great value, an opportunity to learn some new skills, and a great environment to meet rockhounds with similar interest from other clubs. The newsletter will have information about the courses, schedule, and registration.

We have a great club with interesting members and members who are willing to show new rockhounds the ropes. You only have to ask.

Let's make 2018 our most travelled and active year yet! Happy rock hounding!

February Meeting Program

Michael Griffith

One of our members, Greg Hajos, will share some thoughts about his visit to the Gray Fossil Site digs and museum in Gray, Tennessee. The East Tennessee State University (ETSU) Center for Excellence in Paleontology is actively digging the site and cleaning and restoring the fossils.

This fossil site was discovered in 2000 by TDOT construction workers digging a road cut. The road was rerouted to save the site. It is believed that 4.5-7 million years ago, the site had a limestone karst that formed a sinkhole. The sinkhole filled with water. Animals used the sinkhole as the local drinking hole, fell in, and sank to the bottom. The hole filled in with silt over the years preserving the bones as fossils.

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Volunteers can sign up by contacting Vinton Feanny at: FeannyVin@gmail.com.



GMSVP once again will have a booth at the Treasures of the Earth (TOTE) Show being held at the Virginia Beach Convention Center on March 9 - 11. GMSVP's booth will have 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 way to increase awareness and gain new club 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 8th:**

- ◇ **Noon:** Volunteers should meet at our club shed at the Sandy Bottom Nature Park at noon to load the truck and caravan over to the show site (or can meet us at Virginia Beach Convention Center at 1:30—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 9th to Sunday, March 11th:** During the show, GMSVP booth/equipment have four areas that need manning: demonstrations, education/youth programs, geode/slab cutting, and sales.

- **Sunday, March 11th:**

- ◇ Booth and equipment cleanup, teardown, and truck loading at the end of the show.
- ◇ Truck unloading at the club's shed in Sandy Bottom Nature Park.

Members are reminded that (1) we get free access to the show (bring your GMSVP membership card) and (2) we are not competing with the other vendors or clubs.

Questions should be directed to Vinton Feanny at: FeannyVin@gmail.com.



Mark Your Calendars

(Clip and Save)

Note: Programs are notional and subject to change; field trips TBD

JANUARY

4th: Monthly Club Meeting (Cancelled - Weather)

15th: Executive Board Meeting

FEBRUARY

1st: Monthly Club Meeting/Program - Gray Fossil Digs and Museum

MARCH

1st: Monthly Club Meeting/Program TBD

9th - 11th: Treasures of the Earth Show, VA Beach Convention Center

APRIL

2nd: Executive Board Meeting

5th: Monthly Club Meeting/Auction

7th: Pipsico Fossil Field Trip, Boy Scout Reservation, Surry County, VA

MAY

3rd: Lapidary Workshop

12th: GMSVP Spring Picnic

JUNE

7th: Monthly Club Meeting/Program - Volcanoes

JULY

2nd: Executive Board Meeting

5th: Monthly Club Meeting/Program - Material Identification

20th - 22th: Treasures of the Earth Show, VA Beach Convention Center

AUGUST

2nd: Monthly Club Meeting/Rock Swap

SEPTEMBER

6th: Monthly Club Meeting

8th: GMSVP Fall Picnic

OCTOBER

1st: Executive Board Meeting

4th: Monthly Club Meeting/Program - TBD

12th - 14th: Treasures of the Earth Show, VA Beach Convention Center

NOVEMBER

1st: Monthly Club Meeting (Elections)/Program - TBD

DECEMBER

6th: GMSVP Holiday Party

New GMSVP Members—Welcome New Rockhounds!

No new members during the past month

Kudos to two of our newer club members! Please help these great members!

Brigitta Haggins is our new Hospitality Committee Chair. Hospitality is an important social committee that helps create the welcome, fun atmosphere for our members at the meeting.

Tom Meyers is our new Property Committee Chair. Tom manages the shed and ensures our lapidary equipment is in good working order.



The GMSVP 1st Quarter Board Meeting was held on January 15th. GMSVP President, Vinton Feanny, chaired the meeting. All board members were present. The webmaster, newsletter editor, hospitality committee chair, and 2017 VP for Membership also were present. The meeting focused on establishing an initial calendar of GMSVP 2018 activities and the 2018 budget. There are only three Treasures of the Earth (TOTE) Shows in 2018 versus four shows last year. The budget allocations were adjusted to suit the projected lower income from the shows.

Minutes prepared by David Scharff
January 16, 2018
/ original signed /

Pebble Pups/Rock Stars 2018 Plans

Christine Hempley

Thank you for the honor of entertaining the kids (oops-I mean educating them). I'm looking forward to Ms. Barbara Riley and other members helping make the programs more FUN, activity filled, and with yummy eats. I would appreciate any assistance with the programs or any background research, printing materials, getting some lapidary craft or games put together, or extra knowledge you would like to share with our young kids.

Time flies! It's already 2018. The "Signup Genius" e-mail that I distribute about a week before a meeting will contain Pebble Pups program details. Please sign up your "Pebble Pup," so we may plan material availability accordingly.

Our Pebble Pup activity at the February monthly meeting is: "Fossils and the State?". Ms. Riley is excited to explore state fossils, review the geologic timeline, and let us take a bite into some fossils yummys, like trilobite. Come join us and be ready to have fun. If there is time, maybe we'll go over other state symbols like the state mineral.

Thoughts for other Pebble Pups 2018 programs include: Gold and their Uses; Explorium-Gold Prospecting; Art Project or Geocaching during the club's May and September picnics; Sand, Sand, Sand Collection & Classification; Miniatures and Micromounts; Micro Photography; Rocks and their Types; and Plate-tektonics.

December is our time for awarding the kids for their learning effort and get goody bags.

I would like to encourage our youngsters to attend the Treasure of the Earth (TOTE) shows. They may work on the club machines (with supervision) to create their own cabochons or lapidary art and see the galore of vendors and gem art available. Picnics are a great time to not just satisfy those bellies but also to learn from our members regarding prospecting opportunities and experiences, creating your own cabachon, and or having fun with geocaching. Our club auction provide an opportunity for the kids to see other minerals and bid to add to or start their rock/gem collection. Oh, don't forget the field trips. It's a chance to "personally" find/add to a rock collection or just fun prospecting.

ATTENTION Members and Friends: Any micromount experts who would like to share their expertise??? Anyone like to do the Gem Tree Workshop or gold panning experience at one of the picnics for the kids??? Anyone have and willing to loan a Dyno-Lite Digital Microscope???? Anyone care to donate 3 tablespoons to 1 cup of sand from the following areas: West coast-CA, Gulf coast-TX or FL, Northern Lake Erie coast, Hawaii black, red and green Olivine sands, Pink coral Bermuda sand or Ooid sand of Bahamas, Fire Island NY sand, desert sand, or sand from other countries???? Please check with your friends and especially travelers/military contacts for possibility of getting some sand. Thanks!

Don't Miss Out on a Fabulous Week at Wildacres!

Steve Weinberger, EFMLS Wildacres Committee Chair; Source: EFMLS News, Volume 65, Number 3, January 2018

Registration for the Spring (May 21 - 27) and Fall (September 4 - 10) sessions begins January 1st. We're excited about both sessions although our focus this month will be the EFMLS Spring Workshop at Wildacres .

Speaker-in-residence, making her third visit to the "mountain" is none other than Helen Serras-Herman, world renowned glyptographer (precious gemstone carver) and jewelry designer and manufacturer. Helen frequently combines some of her carved gems with gemstone and silver beads, carved and cast silver "faces," and a myriad of other combinations. She has earned several international awards for her work, some of which are featured in museums both here in the United States and Europe.



And, besides being a fabulous, gracious, generous, and talented individual, Helen is an outstanding and interesting speaker. Those who have heard her in the past can readily attest to her attributes. If you've not yet had the pleasure of her company, we urge you to take advantage of the Spring EFMLS Workshop at Wildacres.

What is Wildacres? It's a private retreat located on its own mountain just off the Blue Ridge Parkway in Little Switzerland, NC. The Wildacres Foundation invites

select non-profit organizations to utilize the facility to foster programs promoting the betterment of human relations. You can read more on our website (<http://efmls-wildacres.org/>) and on the Wildacres Retreat website (www.wildacres.org).

Tuition for the week (room and board) is \$425 per person. There is a slight added fee, payable to your instructor(s) for materials used in class. All other mandatory expenses (including gratuity for the permanent Wildacres retreat staff) is included in your tuition. Where else can you get a week's worth of lodging in comfortable semi-private rooms plus 3 excellent meals per day for \$425?

We ask that you select 4 classes per semester so that we have an idea of the class or classes that you would like to take. Since registration in a class is based on when your registration is received, we encourage you to register as soon as possible.

Editor's Note: See the EFMLS Wildacres page (<http://efmls-wildacres.org/>) for information on Spring 2018 classes, instructors, and registration.



2018 EFMLS/AFMS Convention Info

Source: EFMLS News, Volume 65, Number 4, February 2018

THE TAR HEEL GEM & MINERAL CLUB PRESENTS



THE FOURTY SECOND ANNUAL CAPITAL AREA GEM & MINERAL SHOW

Kerr Scott Building, Fairgrounds, Blue Ridge Road, Raleigh, NC

April 6, 7 & 8 2018

FREE
PARKING

Friday 3:00 – 8:00

Saturday 10:00 – 6:00

Sunday 10:00 – 5:00

FREE
ADMISSION

CLUB AREAS

Geodes

Hospitality

Silent Auction

Demonstrations

Fossils

Findings

Gemstones

Rough Material

Ring Sizing

Finished Jewelry

Mineral Specimens

Mineral Identification

CUT HERE

Complete to be eligible for the daily raffle prize. Only one entry per person, per day, will be eligible.

PHONE # _____ EMAIL _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

The Tar Heel Gem & Mineral Club is proud to present the 68th Annual EFMLS Convention held in conjunction with the 71st Annual AFMS Convention and the annual Tar Heel Gem & Mineral Club show. The get-together- will be held in Raleigh, NC the weekend of April 5 - 9, 2018.

Registration forms can be found on the EFMLS and AFMS website (if not there already, they should be there shortly). Copies of the various forms were previously sent to all clubs and Federations.

The host hotel for the convention is the Embassy Suites by Hilton, Raleigh Crabtree, 4700 Creedmoor Rd; Raleigh, NC 27612. Phone 919-881-0000. A block of rooms has been set aside, but you must call the hotel directly to make your room reservations. Let the reservations clerk know that you are with the EFMLS Convention (or Tar Heel Gem & Mineral Club) to obtain the group rate. The rate includes a full hot breakfast each day and is good for Wednesday, April 4 through Monday, April 9.

EFMLS and AFMS Conventions are fun and an important way for you and your club to discover “what the federation does for you”. Meetings are usually reasonably short, open,

and friendly. Best of all, it affords you an opportunity to meet the folks who have stepped up to volunteer for an officer or committee position and to put a face to a name. Over the years, many strong friendships have developed through meetings at these federation confabs.

Every EFMLS club should send at least one representative to the annual EFMLS meeting so that your club can have a say in what's happening. A delegate registration form is included with this issue of the newsletter. Deadline for submitting these forms (which allow your club to have an official vote at the meeting) is March 22nd. The mailing address is on the form.

Lucky Us

Dan Fontaine

References: Carolyn Weinberger, EFMLS Editor, E-mails of January 11, 2018



We are in luck! There will never be a better opportunity for you to attend the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS) and Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies (EFMLS) Annual Conventions! The AFMS and EFMLS 2018 Conventions are being held concurrently with the Tar Heel Mineral Club Annual Show at the Kerr Scott Building, Fairgrounds, Blue



Ridge Road, Raleigh, NC., on April 6th through 8th.

Watch the AFMS (<http://www.amfed.org/>) and EFMLS (<http://www.amfed.org/efmls/>) websites for more information in the weeks to come.

Tar Heel Gem & Mineral Club, Inc.
Raleigh, North Carolina

MINI DRILL PRESS

If you find yourself drilling a number of small holes for your work, you might want to look at the small, inexpensive drill presses now available. They take up just minimal space on your bench and are always ready to give you nice straight holes. Some models even have a variable speed control. I've been very pleased with a low-priced one that's been well-used in my classes for over a year.

Because these machines are only a foot high, they're limited as to the size of workpieces that can fit into the machine and the size of the drill bits you can use. But I've had no problems with drill bits up to about 3/16" (4.5mm), even drilling steel.

The machines are sold by a number of companies. If you do get one, be sure to buy a spare belt because they are generally not available at local hardware stores.



LASER WELDING

A question came up recently about how to solder some jump rings to hold blue topaz briolettes onto a necklace. We've all heard about ways to do some soldering close to a stone, and some of us have sized a ring without taking the stones out of their mounts. We've used wet paper towels, garnet sand, cooling gels, and my favorite of suspending the stone in a dish of water. All techniques bank on the principal of using a small, hot flame to do the job quickly before the stone gets hot enough to crack or change color.

But each job is somewhat of a gamble. Some stones are hardy and some are frail. Jades and jaspers will generally take some heat, but I'd never chance it with the likes of topaz or opal. Trying to shield a stone from the torch is always a betting game, and sometimes you lose.

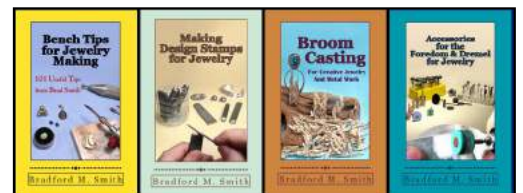
If soldering something close to a stone is too risky, perhaps it's time to consider a no-heat method like laser welding. Most jewelry stores have laser welders these days, and the cost of having it done is quite affordable. They used to have problems doing silver, but now seem to do it routinely.

I've used a local shop twice recently, once for a piece with little emeralds that a "friend" asked me to repair and for a second piece where I needed a safety catch and didn't want the torch heat to expose all the solder lines again.



Learn New Jewelry Skills With
Brad's How-To-Do-It Books:

[www.Amazon.com/author/
bradfordsmith](http://www.Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith).



Picture taken from an Alaska Railroad train heading toward Denali National Park. Railroad goes from Fairbanks (150 mi from the Arctic Circle) to Seward (on the coast). (Photo by Dan Fontaine)

Time travel is a hot topic in my household. Time: lack thereof, slow passage thereof, quick passage thereof -- always fodder for a great conversation. The topic this time is about the beginning of another trip around the sun.

As new officers begin their administration of their clubs for the year ahead there is the usually a swearing in, pledging, passing of the ceremonial gavel, and otherwise commencing the new term. As part of the process the outgoing editor passes to the new editor all of the salient documents related to the position. New treasurer gains check signing responsibilities and copies of all financial documents. New show chair receives all the show history files and so on. Now, what about your new safety chair?

Safety chairpersons should also receive all pertinent files from the outgoing chair. Your club does have a safety chairperson does it not? In this litigious and safety conscious society sure would suggest having one in your club. Anyway, safety files maintained by a safety person might include a club's safety history, general and specific safety guide books, and area's specific mine, quarry, pit, or dig safety information and requirements. There are numerous general safety guides in print. Specific rockhound safety guides are often available through your regional rock and mineral federation. The club's own safety history is often a vital part of the overall safety picture.

Local safety information might include information about specific local weather conditions (anomalies), local mine and quarry rules and regulations, specific safety guides for your show and meeting hall or venue. Other local items to consider are regional poisonous plants, critters, and insects. Safety concerns might also include local area flooding concerns.

Lastly, a club's safety or first aid kit should be passed on to the new chair or the designated medical safety person, who may or may not be the safety chair. The "Kit" should then be checked for outdated meds and supplies... but that will be the topic of another Safety Matters Articles.

Seriously, keeping track of a clubs own safety files is a very important task. One might even say safety files are the more important of the time travel items... as in time to travel on to the next chair.

We wish you all a good and safe collecting season with this trip around the sun. Please remember that your Safety Matters at all times!

Our club is only successful because of all of your help. Thanks for serving as a board member or on one of our many committees!



www.gmsvp.org



2018 Show Dates

March 9 - 11,

July 20 - 22, and October 12 - 14

(All at the VA Beach Convention Center)



GMSVP Meeting

Thursday, February 1st, 7 PM

Sandy Bottom Nature Park's Nature Center

Hampton, VA

Gem Tree Workshop

Gary Bergtholdt is holding 2-3 hour gem tree workshops at his home. If interested, contact

Gary at: gbergtholdt@gmail.com.



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/nuisance/snakes/>; Common Bees of West Virginia, <https://extension.wvu.edu/files/d/c1f9403b-7d46-4e35-8874-14bd3aaf1b08/berkeley-mq-class-common-bees-of-west-virginia.pdf>; Pests of Homes, Structures, People, and Pets, <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7449.html>; Virginia Tech News, <https://vtnews.vt.edu/articles/2007/05/2007-302.html>

(Editor's Note: Reprint from GMSVP Pen, March 2016.) 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 (Cont'd on the next page)



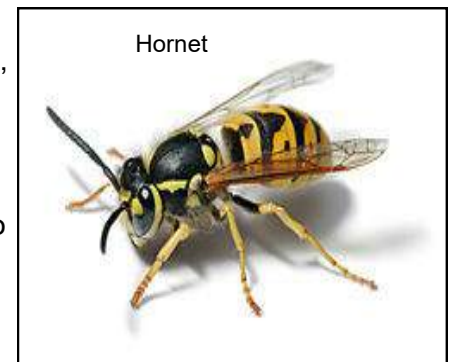
(Cont'd from prior page) dark brown; most dorsal scales are sprinkled with black flecks. Juveniles have the same color patterns as the adults, except that the tip of the tail is a sulfur yellow and juveniles lack the black flecking of the adults. There are regional differences in body color and pattern throughout Virginia. This snake is found statewide, in a wide variety of terrestrial habitats, including wetlands, forests, fields, and edge areas of all types. The copperhead is found in open areas with higher rock densities, and uses all types of structures for cover, including abandoned buildings, brush piles, and stone walls.

The Timber Rattlesnake grows to lengths of 36-60 in. There are two major color patterns: (1) the yellow phase, in which there are black or dark brown 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, 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 (Cont'd on next page)

(Cont'd from prior page) blisters that can become infected. In sensitive victims, the stings can cause anaphylactic shock (symptoms include trouble breathing and fainting) or even death. The counties affected by Fire Ants in Virginia are James City and York and cities of Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and Williamsburg.



Bear sightings are becoming common throughout much of Virginia. Adult black bears are approximately 4 to 7 feet from nose to tail, and two to three feet high at the withers. Males are larger than females. Black bears have small eyes, rounded ears, a long snout, large non-retractable claws, a large body, a short tail, and shaggy hair. Depending on the time of year, adult female black bears commonly weigh between 90 to 250 pounds. Males commonly weigh between 130 to 500 pounds. Incredibly adaptable, black bears occupy a greater range of habitats than any bear in the world. Bear home ranges must include food, water, cover, denning sites, and diverse habitat types. Although bears are thought to be a mature forest species, they often use a variety of habitat types. What should you do if you see a bear? Enjoy and keep a respectful distance! In most cases, the bear will move on quickly. Normal trail noise should alert bears to your presence and prompt a bear to leave before you ever see it. Bears usually run and hide from people. Never approach the animal, and observe it only from a distance. Make it aware of your presence by clapping, talking, singing or making other sounds. If you encounter a bear at close range, remain standing upright, avoid direct eye contact, back up slowly and speak in a calm, assertive and 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!

Birthstones

Sources: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birthstone> & <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garnet>

A birthstone is a gemstone that represents a person's month of birth. Birthstones are often worn as jewelry and as pendants.

Ancient traditional birthstones are society-based birthstones. The table below contains many stones which are popular choices, often reflecting Polish tradition.

The Gregorian calendar has poems matching each month with its birthstone. These are traditional stones of English-speaking societies.



January Birthstone
Garnet

Birthstones by cultures [edit]					
Month	15th- 20th century ^[17]	U.S. (1912) ^[18]	U.S. (2016)	Britain (2013) ^[19]	Hindu ^[20]
January	garnet	garnet	garnet	garnet	serpent stone
February	amethyst, hyacinth, pearl	amethyst	amethyst	amethyst	chandrakanta
March	bloodstone, jasper	bloodstone, aquamarine	aquamarine, bloodstone	aquamarine, bloodstone	Gold Siva-linga
April	diamond, sapphire	diamond	diamond	diamond, rock crystal	diamond
May	emerald, agate	emerald	emerald	emerald, chrysoprase	emerald
June	cat's eye, turquoise, agate	pearl, moonstone	pearl, moonstone, alexandrite	pearl, moonstone	pearl
July	turquoise, onyx	ruby	ruby	ruby, carnelian	sapphire
August	sardonyx, carnelian, moonstone, topaz	sardonyx, peridot	peridot, spinel	peridot, sardonyx	ruby
September	chrysolite	sapphire	sapphire	sapphire, lapis lazuli	zircon
October	opal, aquamarine	opal, tourmaline	opal, tourmaline	opal	coral
November	topaz, pearl	topaz	topaz, citrine	topaz, citrine	cat's-eye
December	bloodstone, ruby	turquoise, lapis lazuli	turquoise, zircon, tanzanite	tanzanite, turquoise	topaz



Editors Note: The information below was received by Michael Griffith and is being shared with our members. The e-mail is from Dr. Alex Hastings, Curator of the VA Museum of Natural History (VMNH). VMNH will be excavating at the Carmel Church site March 5-9, 2018 and is looking for volunteers. If you are interested, please e-mail Alex at: Alexander.Hastings@vmnh.virginia.gov.

Hello Potential Carmel Church Dig Volunteers!

I am happy to say I am officially starting to put together the crew for our spring dig back at the Carmel Church fossil site in Ruther Glen, Virginia. We will be there from March 5th through 9th (Monday-Friday), in order to coincide with spring break for the local colleges/universities. Some of you have been there, others have not. What I'm looking for at this point is an initial head count of who is interested and thinks they can participate. As soon as you can, please send me your names and the dates you would plan to come. If this includes any minors, please let me know their ages. If you know anyone interested in joining (particularly students), feel free to forward this along.

I'll send some more detailed logistics as we get closer to the date, but plan on getting dirty and dressing for the weather. It can be highly variable in early March, but we'll roll with whatever we get. We typically take a lunch break mid-day, where you could either stay at the site with a pack lunch or head into town for a bit to try one of the few local options. There are a couple hotels in the area and we typically stay at the Comfort Inn nearby. I'll go ahead and warn you now, there are no bathrooms on-site, only discrete patches of woods. If you have any general questions, just email me back.

I hate doing this, but we are pretty low on funds for running the dig. In order to be able to keep things going, I'm asking if everyone who comes can bring either \$10 or \$20, or contribute by bringing materials that we will need (list of cheap items below). This is not totally mandatory, but would really help us out.

Things we could really use:

- Toilet Paper (for wrapping bones & teeth): no scents or lotions, but soft & strong is good
- Aluminum Foil: extra tough
- Plaster of Paris: generic kind typically found at Lowes or Home Depot, typically 25 lb bags (less than \$10)
- Zip-log bags: virtually any size is helpful (particularly bigger ones), that have a zip close
- Black Sharpie Markers
- Masking Tape
- Duct Tape

Thanks and hope to see you there!



Need a Volunteer for Important Field Trip Coordinator Chair

The Field Trip Coordinator identifies and informs our members of field trip opportunities. Do you love going on field trips? Here's your opportunity to have fun while finding and coordinating field trips for our club. Vinton Feanny and Michael Griffith will mentor and help you!

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

Please let Vinton Feanny (FeannyVin@gmail.com), if you would like to attend this field trip.

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 7th.

Date: Saturday, April 7th

Time: 9 AM until dark (Note: Low tide is 1 PM.)

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

Guidance within Boy Scout Camp: When you get to the camp, bear right of the building in front of the camp. From there, you will go through a gate and make a left turn at the sign for the Camp Lions. After you go over a bridge, park your car at a parking lot on the right. Follow the signs to the beach, where you will sign a release and pay the collection fee.

Campers may arrive on Friday night, April 6th. 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, Monday, October 30th.

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

Information on Mountain Area Gem and Mineral Association (M.A.G.M.A.): <http://www.wncrocks.com/magma/>



Visit a Show

Source: EFMLS News Volume 65, Number 2, December 2017 & SFMS Lodestar December 2017

February 3-4: 41st Annual Show and Sale. Central Brevard Rock and Gem Club. Kiwanis Recreation Center, 951 Kiwanis Island Park Rd, Merritt Island, Florida 32952. For additional information, contact Roz Mestre, show chairman, 321-431-0159. (<http://www.centralbrevardgems.org>)

February 17-18: Treasure Coast Rock and Gem Show. Treasure Coast Rock and Gem Society. Vero Beach at the Community Center, 14th Avenue & 23rd Street Downtown, Vero Beach, FL. Contacts: <http://www.treasurecoastrgs@gmail.org>; Vina Proper at 772-519-0533; or Ann Metz at 772-231-0218

February 24-25: 59th Gem, Mineral, Fossil and Jewelry Show. Mississippi Gem and Mineral Society. Mississippi Trade Mart on the State Fairgrounds in Jackson, Mississippi. MGMS website: www.missgems.org.

March 3-4: 55th annual Earth Science Gem & Mineral Show sponsored by the Delaware Mineralogical Society. University of Delaware – Wilmington Campus, Arsht Conference Center; 2800 Pennsylvania Ave (Rt 52), Wilmington, DE 19806. Info: www.delminsociety.net

March 24-25: 49th Annual Gem and Mineral Show sponsored by the Che-Hanna Rock & Mineral Club. Wysox Vol. Fire Co Social Hall, 111 Lake Rd; Wysox, PA. Info: www.chehannarocks.com

April 4-8: EFMLS/AFMS Convention and 42nd Annual Capital Area Gem & Mineral Show. Tar Heel Gem & Mineral Club. Kerr Scott Building, NC State Fairgrounds, Raleigh, NC. AFMS Annual Meeting - Thursday, April 5; EFMLS Annual Meeting - Friday, April 6.

April 6-8: Tar Heel Mineral Club Annual Show and EFMLS/AFMS Convention, Raleigh, NC. AFMS Annual Meeting - Thursday April 12th. EFMLS Annual Meeting - Friday April 13th. AFMS/EFMLS Awards Banquet - Saturday, April 14th. Breakfast with the Editors & Webmasters - Sun. April 15th. Info: www.amfed.org

April 7-8: 45th Annual Mineral, Gem, Jewelry & Fossil Show. New Haven Mineral Club. Amith Regional Middle School, 1 Ohman Ave, Orange, CT. Info: www.newhavenmineralclub.org.

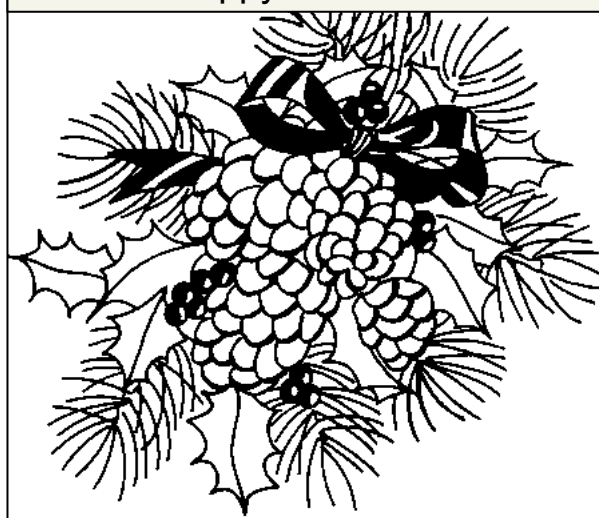
April 14: 14th Annual Earl & Malvina Packard Rock, Gem, & Mineral Show. Southeastern New Hampshire Mineral Club. Dover Veterans Community Center, 156 Back River Rd, Dover, NH. Info: Brian: 207-710-6254 or cshore108@yahoo.com

April 14-15: 20th Annual North Jersey Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show. No. Jersey Mineralogical Society. Midland Park High School, 250 Prospect St, Midland Park, NJ.

April 28-29: Memphis Mineral, Fossil, Jewelry Show “The Earth Wide Open.” Memphis Archaeological and Geological Society. Memphis International Agricenter, 7777 Walnut Grove Road, Memphis, TN. Web: <http://www.TheEarthWideOpen.com>. Show Chair James Butchko, 901 743-0058, Dealer Chair WC McDaniel, 901-274-7706.

May 19: 29th Annual Chesapeake Gem, Jewelry & Fossil Show. Chesapeake Gem & Mineral Society. Ruhl Armory, Towson, MD. Info: chesapeakegem@gmail.com

Happy New Year!



Source: S.C.R.I.B.E. 2014 Clipart

If you have not already done so, please pay your 2018 GMSVP membership dues. Submit the membership form with payment to PO Box on the form. Here's a [link to the GMSVP membership form](#).

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.