



THE VIRGINIA PEN

GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY OF THE VIRGINIA PENINSULA



November 2019

President's Corner

Vinton Feanny

Special Points of Interest:

- GMSVP Holiday Dinner: Dec 5
- Belgrade Fossil Collecting: Dec 6
- Board Meeting: Dec 9

In This Issue

President's Corner	1-2
Chapter Contact Info Dec Holiday Dinner	2
Mining Opals In Idaho	3
GMSVP Board Meeting Onslow Dig 2019 Dec Calendar	4
Safety Matters	5
Jewelry Bench Tips	6
Nov Mtg Program - Bismuth Crystals	7
GMSVP Help Wanted GMSVP Dues Are Due 2020 TOTE Show Dates	8
RGMS Rock Swap	9
Asheville Gem, Mineral, & Fossil Show Gem Tree Training	10
Upcoming shows EFMLS Awards	11
AFMS Code of Ethics	12



Happy Thanksgiving!

I trust that everyone will have a safe and grateful Thanksgiving.

At our Club meeting on November 7th, a new President was voted in as the GMSVP 2020 President. We welcome Debbie Rice as President-elect for 2020. Debbie brings a wealth of knowledge and excitement regarding rockhounding with its attendant activities. Our existing officers, Gary Bergtholdt as Treasurer; Walter Priest as 1st Vice President, Membership; Michael Griffith, 2nd Vice President, Programs; and David Scharff, Secretary, were voted by acclimation to continue for 2020. We have a new Editor in Chief, Hunter Thurmond. Hunter served as Editor for his high school paper and is familiar with newsletters. Our pebble pups Chair, Christine Hempley, will continue with the pups but needs help. Bob Kennedy is our new Webmaster. For all the other members who have periodically chipped in to help the club out on various matters, thanks. Congratulations to all those who volunteered for these positions!

At our upcoming December 5th Holiday Party, awards will be handed out to our Pebble Pups. The new officers will be installed, and Co-Chairs recognized.

Our Holiday Party will be festive and fun for all members. It will give us a chance to renew our acquaintances and to get into the spirit of the season. The club will be providing turkey, ham and fixings. Club members are urged to bring in a favorite dish or dessert to add to the event. (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. **Board Meeting held in new location this month, see page 4.**

GMSVP

P. O. Box 6424
Newport News, VA 23602

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

Officers

President: Vinton Feanny,
FeannyVin@gmail.com
1st VP Membership: Walter Priest,
wetlanddesign@gmail.com
2nd VP Programs: Michael Griffith,
MGriff8645@aol.com
Secretary: Dave Scharff,
chap_dad@yahoo.com
Treasurer: Gary Bergtholdt,
gbergtholdt@gmail.com

Committee Chairs

Field Trips: Bo Mulcahy,
bomulcahy@gmail.com.
Hospitality: Joyce and Bob Kennedy,
joycekennedy63@yahoo.com
Pebble Pups: Co-Chair:
Christine Hempley,
offalstuff@gmail.com (**Need another Co-Chair**)
Shows: **Vacant**
Newsletter: Dan Fontaine,
gmsvp.editor@gmail.com
Property: **Vacant**
Librarian/Historian: **Vacant**
Faceting: Chuck Rogers,
car3rd@verizon.net
Silversmithing: Tim Savage,
savagegems@yahoo.com
Publicity: Michael Griffith,
mgriff8645@aol.com
Mineralogy: Walter Priest,
wetlanddesign@gmail.com
Webmaster: **Vacant**

President's Corner (Cont'd)

Vinton Feanny

(Cont'd from prior page) As in the past, members can take part in an optional Pollyanna gift exchange (-\$10). Gifts should be in keeping with the theme of the

December Meeting Program

Michael Griffith

GMSVP December Holiday Party: Come to the GMSVP

December meeting! It is a great way to celebrate the holidays with our many rockhound friends. The

GMSVP December 5th meeting (Holiday Party) is at 7 PM at the Sandy Bottom Nature Park's Nature Center (enter from Big Bethel Road). The meeting focuses on fun and fellowship. Chairs and tables with tablecloths will be set up to add to a festive atmosphere. The club will supply the turkey, ham, gravy, cranberry sauce, and rolls. Pat Fontaine has volunteered to provide the stuffing and mashed potatoes. Club members attending are requested to bring a delectable vegetable side dish, casserole, or dessert. There will be an optional Pollyanna Gift Exchange (~\$10 to \$15). Gifts should be related to our hobby.



Those participating the Pollyanna Gift Exchange will be given a ticket upon arrival at the meeting. The tickets will be used to determine the order that the members go up to the gift exchange table to select their gift (if desired, any swapping of a selected gift among members can be done after the gift exchange). You don't need to identify who your gift is from, but you can if you want.

Please RESPOND TO Gary Bergtholdt (gbergtholdt@gmail.com), so that he will know about how many will be participating in the Pollyanna Gift Exchange.

RESPOND TO Joyce Kennedy (joycekennedy63@yahoo.com), so that she will know about how many will be coming to the meeting (including family members) and/or participating in the Pollyanna Gift Exchange. We would also like to know what side dish or dessert that you may bring.

Number of members from your family coming to the holiday party. (The projected attendance will be used to determine how much turkey and ham to buy for the holiday dinner.)

- **If your family will be participating in the Pollyanna Gift Exchange.**

The 2020 GMSVP officers also will be installed during the meeting, and closing actions for 2019 and preliminary plans for 2020 will be discussed.

GMSVP's "The Virginia Pen": Non-commercial reprint permission is granted to non-profit organizations, unless otherwise noted.

FAIR USE NOTICE. This publication may contain copyrighted material the use of which has not been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in our efforts to advance the educational understanding of the amateur jewelry fabrication and rock collecting hobbies. We believe this constitutes a 'fair use' of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the U.S. Copyright Law. If you wish to use material from this publication for commercial or purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.



“Blue opal: These look much like 3 dreams I recall. This was so much fun to hunt for, I got a few pieces that I will cab. I didn't have any tool big enough to split bigger pieces open, and many of them had a smoky colored agate instead. Some had a brilliant white fine almost powdery mini-crystals lining the inside. Some had tiny quartz crystals filling the inside with something that flashed metallic-looking -- you never knew for sure what you'd find.” - Ellie is a member who has moved out west where she and her husband own a mine that produces opal.

New Rockhounds

No new additions this month, but still 142 members. Remember to share info about the club with others so we can continue to find new rockhounds!

December 9th Board Meeting

Vinton Feanny

The 4th Quarter GMSVP Board meeting is Monday, December 9th, 7 PM, at the **Hampton Willow Oaks Branch Library, 227 Fox Hill Road, Hampton, VA 23669**. All members are invited to attend. However, only board members can vote.

Onslow Quarry Free Public Digs

Michael Griffith

The Belgrade dig was cancelled, but has tentatively been rescheduled for Friday, December 6th. The Onslow dig on the other hand fell on a beautiful day. Onslow produced this 3+ inch *Otodus Auriculatus* on November 22nd.

The Belgrade rescheduled dig is on a Friday, and you need to be at the quarry by 8 AM for the mandatory safety briefing and waiver signing. It is about a 4-hour drive from Hampton, so I would recommend driving down the night before and getting a place to stay nearby, so that you don't have to get up at 3 AM to get there. Since it's on a Friday, you'll probably have to take a day off (I do, but it's worth it, because these quarries are the closest thing we'll have to the Aurora quarry available to us anytime soon.)

Both quarries are limestone quarries with plenty marine fossils consisting of shark's teeth being found there (and the occasional Meg tooth), fossil sand dollars and urchins, the occasional mammal fossils (ribs and verts), and fossil shells.

You will need the basic safety gear of hard-toed safety shoes (ANSI approved), a hard hat, safety glasses, and a high-visibility vest (Preferably Red/Orange but Yellow will do). Other recommended items are food and water, bug and sun spray (probably not needed as much in December), a rock hammer for extracting fossils from matrix (most fossils I find just surface collecting), and weather-based clothing. It might be very cool in December, and there have been several times when I've been that have been extremely muddy.

Address:

Martin Marietta Belgrade Quarry

5678 Highway 58 South
Maysville, North Carolina 28555

Phone number: (910) 743-6471

The Contact Point for these digs is Danny Humphrey at (910) 376-4001. I would text him probably a day before to ensure the dig is still going on, since they have been cancelled in the past due to really bad weather.



Otodus auriculatus from Eocene age Castle Hayne formation at Onslow Quarry.

GMSVP 2019 Meeting Calendar

Gary Bergtholdt

- Dec 5 - Holiday Party
- Dec 9: Board Meeting

GMSVP 2019 Pebble Pups Calendar

Christine Hempley

- December 5: Awards



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

Judging by experiences with all manner of rock and mineral collecting, it appears that the vast majority of our field identification of minerals and rocks is performed by visual means alone. Indeed, we use our eyes to judge the mating of facets on that stone we are cutting, to lay out the cabochon template on that pretty slab of jasper, to follow the visual clues of the trail as we

hike to that long lost rock quarry. There is an endless variety of how we use our eyes in our hobby. Our eyes allow us to enjoy many areas of our rock, mineral, fossil hobby that we might otherwise be unable to pursue.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Your safety matters.

Gem Tree Workshop

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

gbergtholdt@gmail.com.



Winding Jump Rings

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

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

And for a nice set of mandrels, look for a set of Transfer Punches.

The set has 28 sizes, from 3/32 inch to 1/2 inch, and is only about \$12. In the US it is available from MZS in the Netherlands as item number 250575.



Touching Up a Bezel

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

If you're unsure about the hardness of your wheels, test them on a piece of glass. Glass is about 5 1/2 on the Mohs scale, softer than quartz. So if the wheel doesn't harm glass, it's safe for use on the quartzes and harder stones.

My preference is the one inch diameter ones such as those shown at

riogrande.com/Product/AdvantageEdge-Pumice-Wheels-Medium/332722?pos=2

Work Smarter & Be More Productive With Brad's "How To" Jewelry Books: www.Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith.



Growing Bismuth Crystals

Last month members got the chance to grow bismuth crystals with Tom Leary. Tom grows some of the largest bismuth crystals in the world and has been featured at several trade shows. The process involves melting bismuth with a torch, taking advantage of bismuth's low melting temperature of 520° Fahrenheit, then inducing crystal growth as the bismuth cools.

Members were mesmerized by how simply the crystals were formed and how beautiful they were. Bismuth in raw form has a silvery color. When it's cooled quickly, it oxidizes forming the iridescent colors. The variations in the thickness of the oxide layer that forms on the surface of the crystal cause different wavelengths of light to interfere upon reflection, thus displaying a rainbow of colors. When burned in oxygen, bismuth burns with a blue flame, and its oxide forms yellow fumes. The spiral, stair-stepped structure of bismuth crystals is the result of a higher growth rate around the outside edges than on the inside edges. Members attending the meeting were given a bismuth crystal that Tom made during the meeting.

Interested in crystal growing is growing? If Tom's amazing bismuth crystals have peaked your interest in crystal growing, you aren't alone. Crystals can be grown in many

ways and people seem to contrive new ways all the time. Other than bismuth, which is rare among crystal growth being that it is a metal, crystals can be grown from borax, sugar, alum, copper sulfate, and potassium ferricyanide to name a few. Recently artists have been growing crystals on cool media like insect exoskeleton and deer skull to make wild nature and gem themed art pieces.

If you find yourself exploring crystal growth please share your crystals with the group. *It only takes one starter crystal grower to grow a whole group of crystal growers.*



GMSVP CLUB HELP WANTED

Property Manager

GMSVP is in need of a Property Manager, who would manage our shed at Sandy Bottom Nature Park and maintain our club's Genie grinding/polishing machines and rock saws. The Property Manager may also assist the TOTE Show committee by ordering geodes to be sold at the shows. These property manager duties are presently being done by various club officers, who have other important responsibilities. Please volunteer! Just let Vinton Feanny (FeannyVin@gmail.com) know, if you are interested!

TOTE Show Coordinator

GMSVP also needs a club member to lead our club's Treasures of the Earth Show activity. Our treasurer, Gary Bergtholdt, is presently coordinating the shows as a collateral duty, which takes away from his prime duty as the club's treasurer. The Show Coordinator orders the geodes and coordinates club volunteers and activities at the shows.

Pebble Pups Coordinator

GMSVP also needs a club member to assist our Pebble Pups Coordinator, Christine Hempley. The Pebble Pups Coordinators plans activities for our club's young rockhounds to work toward AFMS Future Rockhounds of America Badges. The coordinator leads a breakout meeting during our monthly meetings with our club's Pebble Pups.

GMSVP 2020 Membership Dues

Club dues are due! Please pay your 2020 club dues at the December 5th Holiday Dinner. If you don't plan to attend the Holiday Dinner, please print out the membership renewal form https://www.gmsvp.org/uploads/3/1/2/7/3127689/gmsvp_membership_form_2015-10_rev.compressed.pdf from and mail it to our GMSVP post office box.



This coming year, 2020, we have three show in VA Beach.

Apr 3-5, Jul 17-19, and Oct 9-11



A huge thanks goes out to all the members who volunteered at the Richmond Gem and Mineral Society's Annual Rock Swap. Turn out was very good and the people were pretty cool too.

We were able to liquidate some of the estate items and various slabs taking up space in the shed. Plenty of new faces came to investigate what the club had to offer.

At the show was a huge Beryl specimen named 'The Green Giant' found by Wayne Gilmore and Tom Leary, the same Tom Leary who came to grow Bismuth crystals

with the club this month!

Agates and slabs from every place imaginable dotted the tables, as well as specimens and various raw materials.





**2nd Annual
Asheville, North Carolina
Christmas Holiday
Gem, Mineral and Fossil Show!**

**December 13th - 15th, 2019
Hours: 10am - 6pm Friday and Saturday
10am - 4pm Sunday
WNC Agriculture Center**

**Rocks, Gems, Crystals, Minerals,
Fossils, Artifacts, Meteorites and More!**

**Open to the public,
Free admission!**

**Directions: Take I-26 to Exit 40, NC 280.
Go south towards Brevard/Mills River.
Drive 0.8 miles, you will pass the Asheville Airport
and Fanning Bridge Road. Turn left into the entrance
to the WNC Agriculture Center off of NC 280.**

(Look for Gem Show signs)

The show is in the Virginia Boone Building.

**The first building on the right when you turn into the Ag Center.
Address: 1301 Fanning Bridge Road, Fletcher, NC 28732.**

**For more information, contact Rick: 828-779-4501
Or email: rick@wncrocks.com**

2019

December 14-15: Miami Mineralogical and Lapidary Guild Semi-annual Show and Sale. 10:00 AM—5:00 PM daily. Evelyn Greer Park, 8200 SW 124 Street, Pinecrest, FL. Admission \$6.00, children under 12 free. INFO: www.miamigemandmineral.com or Sandy Mielke, VP, at www.miamigemandminderal.com

December 14-15: Franklin, Tennessee Earth Treasures Show. Saturday: 9 AM TO 6 PM Sunday 10 AM TO 5 PM Williamson County Ag Expo Park 4215 Long Lane Franklin, TN., 37064. Over 30 Dealers plus classes, speakers, exhibits, demonstrations, silent auction, and door prizes hourly. Show features handmade silver, stone, and Native American jewelry, lapidary and faceting rough, slabs, fossils and mineral specimens, supplies, tools, and more. INFO: www.MTGMS.org/show.htm

2020

January 10-12: 44th Annual Gem, Mineral and Jewelry Show & Sale. Friday and Saturday: 10 AM to 5 PM. Sunday: 12 PM to 5 PM. Event is held at the Central Park Performing Arts Center, 105 Central Park Drive, Largo, FL.

March 7-8: 57th Annual Earth Science and Mineral Show by Delaware Mineralogical Society. Double Tree by Hilton, 4727 Concord Pike (Route 202), Wilmington, DE. Contact: Gene Hartstein (gene@fossilnut.com).

March 21-22: Buffalo Geological Society’s 52nd Gem-Mineral-Fossil Show. The Fairgrounds in Hamburg, Market, Grange & State Police Buildings, Hamburg, NY. Contact: Jerolde Bastedo, jcbastedo@gmail.com.

March 27-30: Annual EFMLS Convention hosted by the Catawba Valley Gem and Mineral Club, Hickory, NC.

May 22: North Shore Rock and Mineral club 57th Annual New England Gem & Mineral Show. Saturday, May 2 (9:00 AM--5:00 PM), Sunday, May 3 (1:00 AM—4:00 PM), Topsfield Fairgrounds, Coolidge Hall, Route 1, Topsfield, MA (GPS: 207 Boston Street, Topsfield, MA. Free Parking. Admission \$6.00, seniors \$4.00, children under 12 free. Contact: www.northshorerock.org or nsmc@verizon.net.

EFMLS 2019 Bulletin Contest

Dan Fontaine

GMSVP Awards: Our club received the first-place plaque for our newsletter, the Virginia Pen, from the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies (EFMLS) 2019 Bulletin Contest. EFMLS forwarded our newsletter to compete in the national American Federation of Mineralogical Societies bulletin contest, where we came in 9th place. Walter Priest presented the plaque to our club editor, Dan Fontaine, who received it on behalf of the club. Club members also received awards for various articles that were included in our Virginia Pen newsletters. They include:

- Ellie Pitts: 7th Place for an article on an “Exciting Dig at the Idaho Opal Mine”
- Brigitta Haggins: 8th Place for an article on “A Rockin Family: Amos Cunnington Farm in Due West, SC”
- Hunter Thurmond: 10th Place for an article on “Pipsico Fossil Field Trip”





AFMS Code of Ethics

(<http://www.amfed.org/ethics.htm>)

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.