



THE VIRGINIA PEN

GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY OF THE VIRGINIA PENINSULA



February 2020

President's Corner

Deborah Rice

Special Points of Interest:

- Living Museum Tour Mar 7
- Board Meeting March 9
- March 8th Shed Clean out
- Belgrade Quarry, March 20th
- TOTE Show, VA Beach Convention Center, Apr 3-5
- GAITHERSBURG, MD Show March 21-22
- GMSVP Meeting, March 5th—VMP

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Tote shows are a big part of fund raising for GMSVP. For most of the shows Geodes arrive sorted, color coated and ready to go to their new home. But they do not come that way.

First Gary makes an order. Then a pallet arrives at his door loaded with 50 pound boxes of Geodes, over 600 pounds worth. These boxes are then sorted to content and opened. Each 50 pound bag is lifted on to a sorting table, counted and color coded. The rocks are then put in crates to be stacked and stored until Tote Show day.

Last week Bo Mulcahy, her boys Aidan and Owen and I helped Gary with the Geodes. It was a lot of work but a lot of fun. Being able to handle the Geodes gave me a heads up on what we have. Making it easier for me to send the rocks to their new homes. Bo was able to handle the unique Geodes. She worked with Gary to get an insight into the best way to cut them.

Involvement in the behind the scenes workings is fun, insightful and helpful to those who have been doing this on their own for years.

Deborah

GMSVP March 5th Meeting Program

Michael Griffith

Thomas Hale will be coming to talk about the Virginia Mineral Project. Virginia has a very rich mineral history, and the VMP has a great record of this. Their Facebook page is loaded with specimen from Virginia.

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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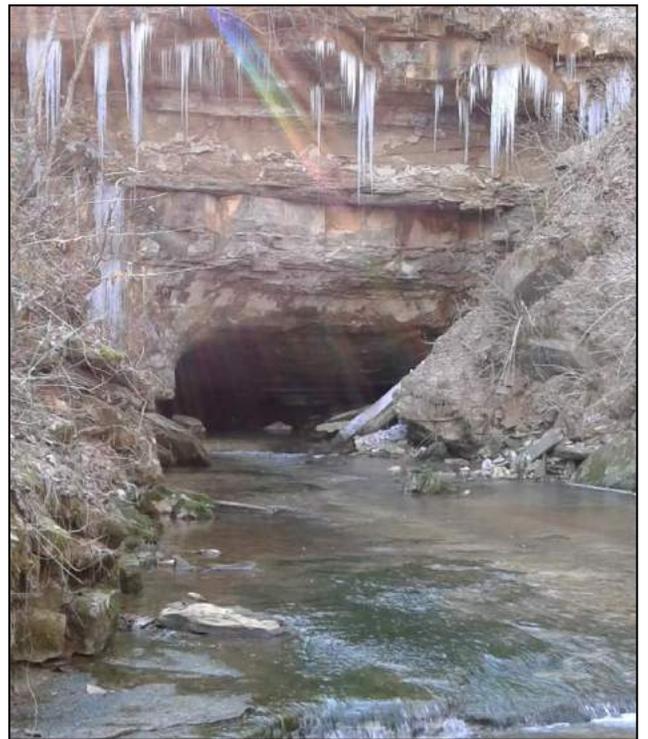
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Hello Ellie!

Dan Fontaine

Club member, Ellie Pitts, owns an opal mine in Idaho and sent us a few pictures to say hello from the wonderful west.

Even her pictures have an opalescence! We hope all is well with you and can't wait to see some of your finds in person. Thank you for sharing the awesome pictures of Idaho and the wild west.



GMSVP 2020 Meeting Calendar

Gary Bergtholdt

- Mar 5: Club Meeting
- Mar 9: Exec Board Meeting
- Apr 2: Club Meeting
- Apr 3-5: VA Beach TOTE Show
- May 7: Club Meeting and Auction
- May 9: Club Picnic
- Jun 4: Club Meeting
- Jun 8: Exec Board Meeting
- Jul 2: Club Meeting
- Jul 17-19: VA Beach TOTE Show
- Aug 6: Club Meeting
- Sep 3: Club Meeting
- Sep 12: Picnic
- Sep 14: Exec Board Meeting
- Oct 1: Club Meeting
- Oct 9-11: VA Beach TOTE Show
- Nov 5: Club Meeting (Elections)
- Dec 3: Christmas Dinner
- Dec 14: Exec Board Meeting



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Pipsico

Hunter Thurmond

The first Pipsico trip of the year is coming up April 17th-19th.

All previous collecting rules still apply. No climbing of steep river bank areas. No parking except in designated areas. No alcoholic beverages. No pets. Speed limit on camp road must be obeyed.

Fees: \$5.00 per person to collect or tent camp.

Cabin rental-\$75.00

Cabinette rental-\$20.00

This site offers a vast assemblage of Mollusca as well as sharks teeth, whale teeth and bone. I have found Various Chesapectens, Ecphoras, large Turritella shells, and a nice olive shell which had a marbled glossy color. The last trip a collector found a 5 inch plus whale tooth!

Bald eagles, king fishers, pileated wood peckers, columbines, swamp iris, horse tail all can be seen in there given seasons while at Pipsico

Naturally I am attracted to items with a story, and every time I find a complete bivalve at Pipsico I am thrilled, especially a complete fossil oyster. These fossil oysters may have given way to the famous oyster Industry that still occupies the James. If you find a complete bivalve, which means both sides of the shell are present and closed, who knows what might be trapped inside. Many collectors take these home and sift the contents, this technique was passed to me by Bill Stine who coordinates the trip. I have found many small gastropod shells this way with dimensions in millimeters.

The state fossil Chesapecten jeffersonius can be found at this locality as well as many other Chesapecten species, including complete specimen.



Photo by Bo Mulcahy

Board Meeting

Dan Fontaine

The 2nd Quarter GMSVP Board meeting is Monday, March 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.



Also check out page 10 for more **Up-coming Shows!**

If you have any shows you would like to share information about please send information, fliers or links to me at HLThurmond@outlook.com. I am always looking for submissions whether it just be information to share, an article you have written, or some other personal creation you would like to share.



Source: EFMLS Newsletter

When I ask folks about the speed of safety, I usually receive odd looks in return. Indeed, the question may be divided into two parts. The first part of the issue is about the time it takes to set up an accident. How long does it take to assemble all the necessary bits of an accident? Let us assemble a simple accident: Get the coffee, place the coffee by the cabbage machine, turn the machine on, crack the cooling water drip line valve, the machine reaches working speed, touch the dopped stone, the first wheel and boom, the awkward position of one's elbow knocks the coffee into ones lap. I'm rather unamused as the coffee is piping hot. Air turns several shades of blue. The accident is over and it is mostly pride that is hurt, clothes to launder..., and the wallet emptier because that was an expensive latté. Elapsed time for the accident's set-up was perhaps 10 minutes. There is no standard timetable for accident preparation. Assembling all its bits may take seconds — or years. The second part of the issue is about the speed of safety's accidents. In the above accident, the latte in the lap took perhaps a second of time. A misdirected hammer strike landing on a knuckle, the necktie caught in the elevator door, the trip one makes on an electrical cord run along the gem show floor, the spill of rock cleaning chemistry on the clothes, the breaking of the rock collecting bag strap all take mere seconds. The speed of safety, the accident part, is usually rather short, in the blink of an eye short. When one looks at the discrete and separate parts that make up the accident, they may or may not actually lead to an accident. Instead, it often takes one additional ingredient — the catalyst. The reaction time with any of the preceding parts is usually not an issue, the reaction time to the catalyst is vital. Suppose the latte cup could have been caught with the spilling of nary a drop, the hammer strike been quickly re-directed, or the trip recovered without a fall, while good reaction times might not prevent the accident, they could mitigate the worst of the effects. True, it is best in matters of safety, to evaluate potential hazards, questionable situations, and likely outcomes regarding safety outlooks. It may also be wise to also be aware of one's own abilities, limits, and tiredness with regard to safety matters. To further the thought, the reaction times in common activities such as driving a vehicle have been extensively studied. To summarize, in many of those studies, it appears we often think we are more capable than is actually the case. One particular area of concern is tiredness. Tiredness is a frequent contributor to breakdowns of proper safety measures. Tiredness is a frequent contributor to many situations and oft times not favorably. The final comment is to, please, remain vigilant with ensuring all aspects of being safe because your safety matters. Ellery Borow, EFMLS/AFMS Safety Chairman

COMMITTEE OF THE MONTH WILDACRES WORKSHOP COMMITTEE

Source: EFMLS Newsletter

The Wildacres Workshop Committee has the huge task of overseeing the operation of and responsibility for the two sessions (spring and fall) of the EFMLS workshops held at Wildacres, near Little Switzerland, NC. The functioning of the Wildacres workshops falls to the Chairman (Steve Weinberger), Director (Pamm Bryant) and Registrar (Suzie Milligan) who work with the Wildacres staff, set up the schedule, procure instructors, make sure equipment is available, help plan the meals, publicize the sessions, register participants, arrange accommodations, and the list goes on. The committee consists of the Chairman, Director and Registrar and six (6) members of an advisory committee. The Chairman is appointed by the EFMLS President and the Chairman appoints the Registrar and Director. The six (6) other members of the committee are selected for a three-year term and may serve for two consecutive terms. Two members are selected each year. The six current members of the committee are: [The number of years left in each member's appointed term are listed in parentheses after their names.] K.C. Foster (1), Ken Valko (1), Gary Bergtholdt (2), Mark Kucera (2), Valerie Johnson (3) and John Milligan (3). Next to the Annual Convention, the two sessions of the Wildacres Workshop are the largest gathering of EFMLS club members each year. The Committee works hard and diligently to make sure there is a wide range of classes and programs to attract a variety of interests of possible participants. Each session has a guest speaker who does numerous presentations during the session. The spring session guest speaker this year will be Bob Jones. Sign up today! One trip to Wildacres and participants are usually hooked. The atmosphere is casual and relaxed, you learn something new, meet with old friends and make new ones. The instructors are top notch and, because most classes contain students who are new to whatever is being taught, are very patient explaining how to do whatever. The 2020 Spring and Fall Session Class Schedules, registration forms and other information can be found on the EFMLS website at <https://efmls.org/wildacres> or by contacting the Chairman, Director or Registrar of Wildacres. -Wildacres Committee Members

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 Deborah Rice (Heritageeducation@yahoo.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.

Volunteers Needed For TOTE Shows

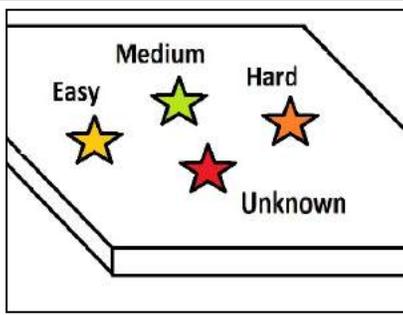
GMSVP participates in Treasures of the Earth (TOTE) shows at the Virginia Beach Convention Center and we need your help! Please volunteer for the next TOTE show on April 3 - 5, 2020. GMSVP has a booth with displays to educate the public about Virginia's natural resources and our club. Members also display their collections and demonstrate the equipment. These shows also are a great medium to increase awareness and gain new members.

Any of our members may use the club's equipment during the show. All they have to do is sign up to reserve a time. While the equipment can be used without a reservation, those signed up will have first preference. Members will be available to provide training on equipment proper use and safety for new rockhounds. Volunteers have ample time to also see the show.

Members are reminded that we get free access to the show bring your GMSVP membership card. Questions should be directed to Deborah Rice or Gary Bergtholdt.



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



IDENTIFYING UNMARKED SOLDERS

There are plenty of ways to mark your sheet or wire solders, but suppose you forgot to mark them and have a couple that you can't identify. The answer is to compare the melting temperature of the unknowns with that of a known solder. What I do is take a thick scrap of copper or nickel and arrange several solders on it. Ideally, I would have a sample of easy, medium and hard known solders surrounding the unknown solder. Then

I heat the plate from the bottom and watch the order in which the solders melt.

INEXPENSIVE ELECTRIC WAX PEN

You can make your own wax pen from a small soldering iron plugged into a light dimmer switch for heat control. Both components are easily found at a big hardware store or at Harbor Freight. As an example of the components, see items # 43060 and # 47887

File the tip of the soldering iron into the shape you prefer or even better get a soldering iron with replaceable tips. Then you can make several tip shapes for different tasks. Set the dimmer control just hot enough to melt the wax without producing any smoke.

A tip design that I find ideal for some work is a length of small gauge wire that lets me reach in around the model to melt some wax. The wire is 18ga and about 15mm long. I use Sterling wire to conduct heat easily to the tip, and I silver solder it into a hole on the end of a copper or brass rod that fits into the soldering iron.

Discover New Jewelry Skills With Brad's "How To Do It" Books at:

www.Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith.



2020 TOTE Show Dates

- April 3-5, VA Beach Convention Center
- July 17-19, VA Beach Convention Center
- October 9 -11, VA Beach Convention Center

Next Treasures of the Earth Show: VA Beach Convention Center on April 3 - 5

The trip to Onslow was rescheduled for snow, and we have one more upcoming opportunity at the Belgrade mine. The Martin Marietta corporation has been very gracious in letting the public hunt for fossils at their quarry. It is a great location to find shark's teeth. They are both fossil marine environments and are very similar to the famous Aurora material (which is only about 45 minutes away) Megalodon teeth, as well as fossil mammal bones, have been found, but are rare.

The dig dates are always on a Friday, and it's roughly a four hour drive from the peninsula. You need to be at the location before 8 AM for the mandatory safety briefing, so you either need to be on the road by about 4 AM or start your journey the night before and get a place to stay. The safety briefing involves watching a film, getting briefed on the particular mine, regulations, and waiver signing. I shouldn't need to remind folks that it's been getting harder and harder to get into quarries these days and this is a fantastic opportunity, so be sure to LISTEN and OBEY all rules given at the safety briefing.

Required Safety gear is: Steel-toed or ANSI equivalent boots, long pants, safety glasses, hard hat, and a high visibility safety vest (preferably red/orange.)

Recommended gear: Sun screen(!), bug spray, WATER(!) as it's going to be VERY HOT, food, buckets. You might want to pack some rags and old towels as it can get quite muddy there (like the last two trips I went to).

The Onslow consist of mostly transported overburden and loose sand and dirt. Surface looking is recommended and has been quite productive. Hammers and chisels might be needed, but unlikely. I've seen people dig and sift with some luck but that seems like too much work for me. You're free to try it, if you like.

The Belgrade quarry hasn't been hunted for about a year as it's been underwater since last year's hurricane.

Date/Location:

Belgrade Quarry, Friday, March 20th

- 5678 Highway 58 South, Maysville, North Carolina 28555
- Tel: (910) 743-6471



March 21-22, 2020 – GAITHERSBURG, MARYLAND

56th Annual Gem, Mineral, Fossil Show; Montgomery County Fairgrounds. 16 Chestnut Street Saturday 10am-5pm, Sunday 11am-5pm. 20+ vendors, 40+ exhibits.

Contact Doug Baum at Gem, Lapidary, & Mineral Society of Montgomery County, MD. for more information at **240-888-7485** or at www.glmsmc.com



56th Annual Gem, Mineral, Fossil & Jewelry Show

Date/Time: **March 21-22, 2020 Saturday 10-6, Sunday 11-5**

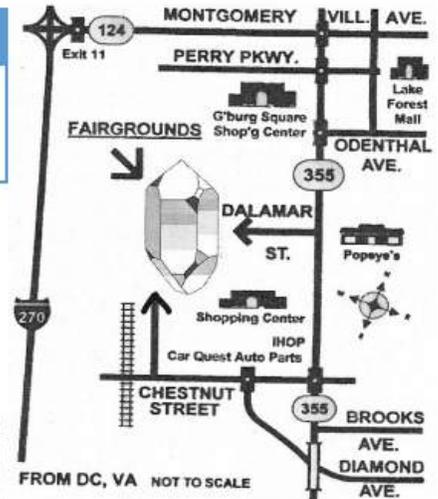
Location: **Montgomery County Fairgrounds; Building #6
16 Chestnut St. Gaithersburg MD 20877**

Featuring:

Hourly Door Prizes	20+ Vendors of minerals, beads, fossils, gems & jewelry
Gold Panning	40+ Exhibits by club members - including junior exhibits
Fluorescent Minerals	Learn to make a gemstone in the shop
Raffle Prizes	Mini Mine, Free minerals & activities for children
Free Parking	Demonstrations of Faceting, Beading, Jewelry Making, Physics

Children (11 and under) Free! Ages 12 and over \$6
Scouts in Uniform Free! 4H youth with 4H identification Free!
More info at: www.glmsmc.com

Show this flyer for
\$1 off admission price
(applies to each member in your group)



Visit a Show

Source: EFMLS (<http://www.amfed.org/efmls/>) & SFMS (<http://www.amfed.org/sfms/>) Websites

March 7-8: 57th Annual Earth Science and Mineral Show sponsored by Delaware Mineralogical Society. Double Tree by Hilton, 4727 Concord Pike (Route 202), Wilmington, DE. For info Email Gene Hartstein at 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. For more info email Jerolde Bastedo at jcbastedo@gmail.com.

March 21-22: 56th Annual Gem, Mineral, Fossil and Jewelry Show sponsored by the Gem, Lapidary and Mineral Society of Montgomery County, MD. Montgomery County Fairgrounds, Building 6, 16 Chestnut Street, Gaithersburg, MD Saturday 10:00 am to 6:00 pm, Sunday 11:00 am to 5:00 pm. www.glmsmc.com.

March 27-30: Annual EFMLS Convention hosted by the Catawba Valley Gem and Mineral Club, Hickory, NC www.efmls.org/annual-convention.

March 28-29: 51st Annual Gem, & Mineral Show sponsored by the Che-Hanna Rock & Mineral Club. Wysox Volunteer Fire Co. Social Hall, 22 Lake Road, Wysox, PA Saturday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Sunday 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. www.chehannarocks.com.

April 21-26: Kentucky Mountain Mushroom [and Agate] Festival. Irvine, Kentucky. Agate Hunts Tuesday-Thursday, Rock Show Friday-Sunday and Mushroom festival Saturday-Sunday www.mountainmushroomfestival.org/



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.