

The Ventura Gem & Mineral Society presents:  
**Rockhound Rambling**  
The Official Bulletin of the VGMS

Volume 70 Issue 10

October 2024

INDEX

## Join Us for Rocktoberfest!

As announced last month, Rocktoberfest is soon upon us! A potluck picnic breakfast. A silent auction of rocky wonders for everyone. A silent auction just for kids. (Bring your Pebble Pup Bucks!) Tailgate sales and swaps. Bring plenty of cash! Interested? Here are details:

Date: Sunday, October 27

Place: VGMS clubhouse (11969 N. Creek Rd., Ojai)

Set-up: 8am (help needed with pop-ups, chairs, etc.)

Breakfast served: 9:30am

Silent Auction: 10:30-11:45am

Tailgating: 8am-1pm

Clean-up and close: 1pm

The club will provide basics (like eggs and pancakes), but we encourage everyone to bring bacon for the grill and to crack open the family cookbook and bring your favorite breakfast goodies in quantities to share, along with your own plates and table settings. So we can get an accurate head count, go to the member section of our website and the Rocktoberfest signup: <http://whosbringingwhat.com/vgms>. The wearing of Bavarian dirndls and lederhosen is strictly optional. Regrettably, no dunkel or weissbier allowed. Anyone know how to play a tuba and accordion?



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# Ventura Gem & Mineral Society (VGMS)

P.O. Box 1573, Ventura, CA 93002

## Purpose of the VGMS:

In a welcoming club environment, VGMS encourages interest in the earth sciences, mineral and fossil collecting, field trips, and the lapidary arts, including jewelry making. Our monthly meetings feature interesting lectures by amateurs and experts. Via facilities in our clubhouse, we offer workshops and opportunities for crafting polished stones, in addition to maintaining a museum and library for educational use. We also sponsor an annual show for members to share their collections and jewelry with the community, during which we award a student scholarship in the Earth sciences.

## Club Essentials

### Contact

Email: [info@vgms.org](mailto:info@vgms.org) Website: [www.vgms.org](http://www.vgms.org)

### Annual Membership Dues

First adult member in a household: \$20

Subsequent adult member(s) and children ages 6-18: \$10 each

Children ages 5 and under: no dues with adult member

### Regular Meeting

7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. via Zoom or at The Poinsettia Pavilion

Santa Paula Room, [3451 Foothill Rd., Ventura, CA 93003](http://3451FoothillRd.com)

January through October: 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month

November and December: 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month

Anyone may attend and is welcome. The December meeting is normally a holiday party.

### Board Meeting

7:00 p.m. via Zoom

Santa Paula Room, [3451 Foothill Rd., Ventura, CA 93003](http://3451FoothillRd.com)

First Thursday of the month

### Field Trips

Announced monthly in the bulletin and the regular meeting.

### Annual Show

The Club's Annual Gem Show is held the first full weekend in March at the Ventura County Fairgrounds.

### Workshop/Museum

[11969 N. Creek Road, Ojai, CA 93023](http://11969N.CreekRoad.com)

Open Workshop Day: 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month

Certified Members' Workshop: 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month

### Federation Affiliation

California Federation of Mineralogical Societies (CFMS)

### VGMS Club Colors

Blue and gold

### Permission to reprint

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### Photo of the month credit

Photo provided by Jim Brace-Thompson.

## 2024 Elected Officers

<b>President</b>	David Springer
<b>1<sup>st</sup> VP, Programs</b>	John Cook
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> VP, Field Trips</b>	Tyrone LaFay
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> VP, Show Chair</b>	Diane Cook
<b>Treasurer</b>	Lauren Wideman
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	Sheri Hultman
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	Erin Valenzuela
<b>Federation Director</b>	Jim Brace-Thompson
<b>Bulletin Editor</b>	Celia Churchill
<b>Parliamentarian</b>	Nancy Brace-Thompson
<b>Web Director</b>	Troy Schmidt

## 2024 Committee Chairs

<b>Ways and Means</b>	Adrian Ruiz and Jenifer Russell
<b>Museum</b>	Jim Brace-Thompson and Troy Schmidt
<b>Library</b>	Robert Seaton
<b>Historian/Archivist</b>	Jim Brace-Thompson
<b>Host/Hostess</b>	Susan Slyker
<b>Pebble Pup Chairs</b>	Lisa Batchelder-Hetrick and Erin Valenzuela
<b>Club Custodian</b>	Jake Bailey
<b>Club Stewards</b>	Ron Wise, David Springer, Tyrone LaFay, John Cook, and Jake Bailey

## LETTERS

# President's Message

David Springer



October is upon us as the Halloween decorations are coming out, evenings are cooler, and the sun sets a bit earlier. This is my favorite season each year, as we begin to see the leaves change color. We completed our last "Summer Nights" open work shop club house for the year. Another change is that our club membership meetings for November and December are on the SECOND WEDNESDAY of the month as opposed to the fourth

Wednesday. This allows us to better plan for and enjoy Thanksgiving and the Christmas holidays.

Our work shop activity is really humming along and I remind folks to purchase your equipment usage cards (formerly called our "saw cards") from Nancy, Lauren, and/or Diane at our membership meetings. Please also remember to sign up at our scheduled workshops at <http://whoscoming.com/vgms/>; this results because we have a greater number of people coming to the workshops. Also, voting for the Rockhound of the year is still open with your votes due to me by October 31<sup>st</sup>; we have separate awards for adults and pebble pups/juniors. We have an Rocktoberfest to look forward to on October 27<sup>th</sup> with a group breakfast (lots of extra bacon for all), a silent auction

and tailgating amongst members, we hope to see you all there at our clubhouse for this annual event. Please remember to sign up to bring a food item on [whosbringingwhat.com/vgms](http://whosbringingwhat.com/vgms) and if you'd like to pitch in and help set up and take down.

Our club is also starting to complete a year end All American Club yearbook for 2024. Our editor Celia will be sending out a questionnaire in October to members for their input to assist us authors of this yearbook in capturing all our members did in 2024. Please look for that and please consider filling it out as best you can to help with the considerable effort we put into compiling this >100 page publication! We have won the award for this national competition the last several years in a row and aim to continue this trend!

In November, our program will be a silent auction at Poinsettia Pavilion. We just got an estate donation last weekend and items from that will be available to members during the Rocktoberfest and November meeting silent auctions. In December we will have our holiday party at Poinsettia Pavilion, more details will be forthcoming on these events.

I am always interested in hearing from you, and your ideas about how to make our club even better. You can reach me by e-mail: [coastallapidary@gmail.com](mailto:coastallapidary@gmail.com), or by phone at 805-450-5025.

Let there be Rocks! David.

## NEWS

# Program Review and Schedule

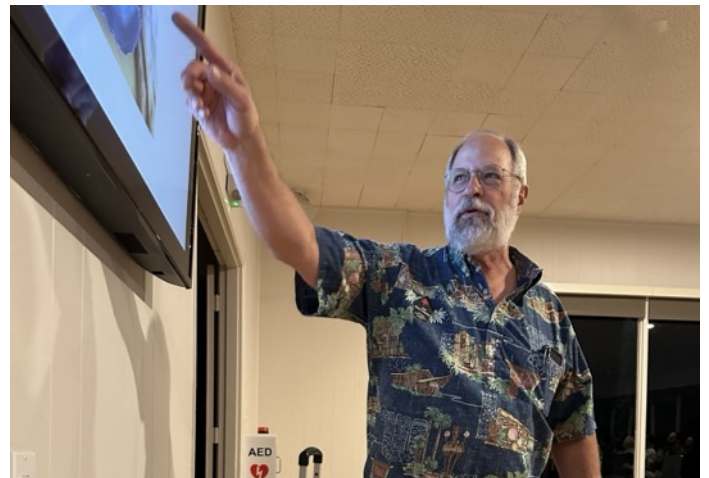
John Cook, 1<sup>st</sup> VP – Programs



## Program Review - Fakes and Phonies

On September 25, 2024 our program was our very own Jim Brace-Thompson who talked about "Enhanced & Synthetic Gemstones: Fakes and Phonies" Jim did a great job showing how precious and semi-precious gemstones that are created in the lab. Sometimes the recreated gemstone is less flawless than the real gemstone. In fact, using unused "Tidy Bowl" cleaner

can turn Howlite into Turquoise! It was an interesting talk with a lot of information. Thank you, Jim for the great talk.







### This Month - Virgin Valley Opal

The October 23 club meeting program will be presented by Walt Lombardo on "Precious and common Opal from Virgin Valley Opal District, Humboldt County Nevada". Virgin Valley has been producing precious opal for more than 100 years. The opal is found in the Miocene age rhyolitic tuffs along with gold

and minerals bearing uranium (carnotite) and mercury. The opal can be highly fluorescent, due to uranium. The precious opal showing spectral colors occurs in nodules and fossilized wood, bone and teeth. It will be a very interesting talk.

Walt Lombardo is a geologist with more than 35 years' experience mineralogy, mining and mineral exploration. Walt is also owner of Nevada Mineral & Book Club Company located in Orange, California.



## Looking for a 2025 Scholarship Recipient

Nancy Brace-Thompson, Scholarship Chair

It's time to find our 2025 scholarship recipient and I wanted to let everyone know what an applicant needs to know:

The recipient may be a graduating high school senior accepted to a college program, a 2- or 4-year college student, or a graduate student:

They shall be majoring in one of the earth sciences or a field directly relevant to the mission of VGMS (e.g. science education, gemology and lapidary arts, etc.).

They shall have maintained a grade point average of 3.0 or

better during high school or undergraduate work.

They shall submit a 250-word essay describing his/her educational goals.

They shall have two separate letter-of-recommendation from instructors in the earth science fields, science teachers, counselors, and/or community leaders.

I will also be sending letters to professors in earth science departments of local 2- and 4-year colleges, but if you know of someone who fits the criteria and would like to apply, please have them contact me at [nbraceth@gmail.com](mailto:nbraceth@gmail.com).

## Workshop

### A Good Beginning

Jim Brace-Thompson

September 10<sup>th</sup> saw the final Summer Nights Tuesday workshop, which now gives way to Autumn Afternoons as we head toward the Winter Solstice and darkness descends ever earlier. We don't want folks navigating the bends of North Creek Road after sunset. Workshop Stewards Ron Wise and John Cook oversaw members Julie Cox, Shirley Layton, Rich Pisor, Belinda Poore, Alena Rieger, Michael Rittenberg, Robert Seaton, Ryan

Canon, and me. Rich and Ryan manned the flat lap and Robert was in the saw room a good bit of the time while the rest of us hit the Genies. It was a good night with healthy attendance and many good projects polished off in the workshop studio.

I missed the September 21<sup>st</sup> workshop while volunteering at a gem show up in Monterey, but our logbook shows the following members were in attendance: Stewards Ron Wise and David Springer and Shirley Layton, Robert Seaton, Rich

Pisor, and Belinda Poore.



*Oh, no! The look on John's face suggests something's off with one of the big slab saws!*

through books in the club library. Because twilight was already approaching as we closed the doors, I understand these Autumn Afternoons may last just one more Tuesday, and then we'll be back to the usual schedule of two weekend workshops a month. Darn! Just as I was getting into a groove...



*Robin and Kaylee craft cabs on October 6.*



*Checking out the goods on September 10.*



*Checking out the goods on October 6.*

Our first October workshop on Sunday the 6<sup>th</sup> saw Stewards Ron Wise, David Springer, and Tyrone LaFay along with members Julie Cox, Teagan Groh, Shirley Layton, Rich Pisor, Robin and Kaylee Tan, Alena Rieger, Michael Rittenberg, Troy Schmidt, Dick and Phyllis White, and myself. Another fine turn-out! Dick and Phyllis were stopping by to visit while Troy tended to the museum room and the rest of us hit the slab and trim saw, the flat lap, and the Genies.

Tuesday, October 8<sup>th</sup> saw our first Autumn Afternoon, with hours adjusted 3-6 pm for declining daylight. Because of the early hour, folks trickled in a bit more slowly than usual, but we still saw a fair number, especially for a weekday. Stewards David Springer and Ron Wise already had operations well underway with the slab saw as members arrived: Shirley Layton, Rich Pisor, Michael Rittenberg, Robert Seaton, Julie Cox, Belinda Poore, Matt Wyeth, and myself. In addition to lapidary work, Robert and I took another crack at going



*Julie picks through the kitty litter, thankful to find slabs rather than the alternative.*





*Our shop stewards are here to serve!*



*"No, really," claims David in the saw room. "It's not a torture device!"*

## Workshop

### Weeding Continues at the Club Library

Jim Brace-Thompson

Robert Seaton, David Springer, Erin Valenzuela, and I spent the morning of September 28 huddled in the clubhouse library room with my dog Tornjak getting truly serious with our library weeding project. As noted last month, we've undertaken this process to remove books taking up shelf space that are deemed unessential or tangential for club purposes and member interests, especially titles that have not been checked out for years and years, if ever. The goal? To have a streamlined library more easily organized and accessible and truly useful for our army of amateurs. Books targeted for removal? Duplicate copies, outdated fieldtrip guides, old and arcane textbooks, overly technical tomes from geological surveys, old black-and-white books doing disservice to colorful fluorescent minerals, etc.

We made significant progress. Some 300 books have been boxed up and will be made available for purchase by club members at Rocktoberfest and at our November silent auction at a buck a book. That still leaves more than 300 books on our shelves that can assist you, whether you're looking for a place to collect minerals or fossils, tips on lapidary or metal work or jewelry-making, learning about meteorites or fluorescent minerals, gold prospecting, identifying specimens in your collection, or just gazing at pretty pictures in a coffee-table book. It's all there! If you haven't acquainted yourself with our library holdings, check it out next time you're at the clubhouse. Now that we've winnowed the collection, the next step will be getting it better organized to assist your perusal.

Over the years, we've accepted pretty much any book that was donated to the library, and we are grateful for them because they've helped to build a very solid collection. Going forward, we need to be much more selective, though, with a target on new books (sorry; no old textbooks from the 1960s!) and titles immediately applicable to the interests of amateur Rockhounds, fossil collectors, and lapidary artists. For instance, no copies of the 1989 AAA Travel Guide to Nevada. But yes to any brand new copies of Gem Trails of California! We have limited space in our library room, and we want to maximize it with titles of most direct appeal to the most members possible.



*Pick through these boxes and more for any books you might want at Rocktoberfest.*

# Federation News

## CFMS Alert on Proposed National Monuments

Jim Brace-Thompson, Federation Director

According to a recent email from the President Marcia Goetz of the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies, there's a push for President Biden to declare two new national monuments in southern California during his remaining months in office: Chuckwalla National Monument (660,000 acres) and Kw'tsan National Monument (390,000 acres). The lands within the proposed monuments include well-known collecting sites like the Hauser Geode Beds, Chuckwalla agate, chalcedony and jasper fields, and classic spots where blue Dumortierite and kyanite, petrified wood, and petrified palm have been collected since at least the 1930s. Per Marcia's email, should these areas become national monuments, a huge swath of desert land would be permanently closed to recreational rockhounding.

Whether you approve or disapprove such designation, Marcia encourages you to write your elected representatives in Congress to voice your opinion, and she provides web addresses to assist in finding your representatives and their contact info, along with a link to the White House:

<https://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov/> <https://www.congress.gov/members/find-your-member> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact>



*Some worry this could become the fate of the famed Hauser Geode Beds.*

## Meeting Minutes

VGMS General Meeting, September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at the Poinsettia Pavilion.

### Attendees:

Called to order with a welcome and Flag Salute at 7:30pm PST, David Springer, Presiding. 7-7:30 was social time. There were 35 members, 2 guests, and 2 juniors.

### Announcements

#### Minutes

Erin Valenzuela motioned to approve the August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024 minutes. Richard Slyker seconded. Motion passed.

#### Clubhouse News

Get your cash cards! \$10 and \$25 cards are available. The clubhouse is open Sunday 10/6 from 12-3pm, Tuesday 10/8 from 4-7pm, and Saturday 10/19 from 9am-12pm.

#### Rocktoberfest

This year it will be Sunday, October 27<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am, with setup starting at 8am. Anyone interested in tailgating may sell rock related items in the parking lot. Food is a potluck, please go to <http://whoscoming.com/vgms/> to sign up for a side dish.

#### Rockhound of the Year

The award for both adults and Pups/Juniors are accepting nominations. Forms were attached to the August Rockhound Rambler. Return them to David Springer by October 31<sup>st</sup>. Winners will be announced at the December Holiday Party.

#### Meeting Schedule

November and December member meetings will be moved to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month due to the holidays.

#### Tonight's Program

Our own Jim Brace-Thompson educated us about "Fakes and Phonies." Jim told us about the ways "Fakes" can be made, ie. growing, dying, heating/irradiating or bonding. He showed us both "reals" and "fakes" and talked about how to tell them apart, which can be very difficult. Even G.I.A. experts have a hard time. Thank you Jim!

### New Business

Nothing to report.

apply.

## Old Business

### Clubhouse Cleanout

A small group will meet at the library, 9/28 at 9am, to continue the cleanout.

## Officer Reports

### 1<sup>st</sup> VP – Programs: John Cook

Thanks again to Jim. John is working on something special for the October meeting.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> VP – Field Trips: Tyrone LaFay

The Clear Creek overnight field trip is 10/11-10/13. Make sure to get your permits. We will be looking for plasma agates and serpentine. See <http://whoscoming.com/vgms/> for more information.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> VP – Show: Diane Cook

Not present

### Treasurer: Lauren Wildman with Diane C. and Nancy B-T

Nancy reported bills are being paid and they are working on the CD paperwork.

### Membership Secretary: Erin Valenzuela

There are 201 adult members, 35 Pebble Pups, and 14 Juniors. At 250, this is our biggest club in years.

### Secretary: Sheri Hultman

Nothing to report.

### Bulletin Editor: Celia Churchill

The due date for the next bulletin is October 10<sup>th</sup>. Please send submissions to [vgmseditor@gmail.com](mailto:vgmseditor@gmail.com)

### Federation Director: Jim Brace-Thompson

Camp Paradise went well and they are planning next year. The CFMS business meeting is coming up on November 8-10. They are looking for a host for next year's federation show. Finally, Rock & Gem magazine is looking for a short article (500-750 words) with 3-5 pictures. The deadline is October 7<sup>th</sup>.

### Webmaster: Troy Schmidt

Not Present

### Parliamentarian/Scholarship: Nancy Brace-Thompson

Planning an article in the bulletin to encourage students to

## Committee Reports

### Pebble Pups: Lisa Batchelder-Hetrick & Erin Valenzuela

For September's meeting a group went to DinoFest at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles. They learned a lot about dinosaurs and Jared put on a scavenger hunt at the museum. A new dinosaur will be unveiled November 17<sup>th</sup>, named Gnatalie. In October, Kylee will be leading a project at Roctoberfest. Reach out to us at [vgmspups@gmail.com](mailto:vgmspups@gmail.com) if you have questions about our program or would like to help. No experience needed!

### Clubhouse Search: Diane Cook:

Not present.

### Educational Outreach: Jim Brace-Thomson

No one has reached out for this school year yet.

### Museum: Troy Schmidt & Jim Brace-Thompson

Will meet with David to look at rocks that the club got through a trade with Texas.

### Ways & Means: Jennifer Russel

Made \$89 tonight. Thank you Jim, Audrey, Shirley, and David for the donations. We're always looking for donations!

### Hostess: Susan Slyker

Thank you Art and Susan for the yummy treats! October will be Erin. November is our pumpkin potluck.

### Archivist/Historian: Jim Brace-Thomson

Nothing to report.

### Librarian: Heather & Robert Seaton

Cleanout this month 9/28 at 9am will continue to weed out old and duplicate publications.

### Stewards: Ron Wise, John Cook & David Springer

Nothing to report.

The next members meeting is Wednesday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 at 7:30 at the Poinsettia Pavilion.

Robert motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:15pm and Troy seconded. The motion to adjourn passed.

*Respectfully submitted on September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024.*

*Sheri Hultman, Recording Secretary.*



# Meeting Minutes

## VGMS Board Meeting, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024, via Zoom

Called to order at 7:00pm., David Springer presiding. Attendees were David Springer, John & Diane Cook, Sheri Hultman, Celia Churchill, Robert Seaton, Jim & Nancy Brace-Thompson, Phyllis & Dick White, Lisa Batchelder-Hettrick, Tyrone LaFay, Terry Wilson, and Troy Schmidt.

Nancy motioned to approve the minutes of the September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Board meeting as they appeared in the September bulletin. Troy seconded. Motion passed.

### New Business

#### Rockhound of the Year

Nominations are now open for Pebble Pups, Juniors, and adults. Couples and siblings can be put on one application. They are due to David by 11/1/24. David will send a copy of applications to the board before the next meeting.

#### Rockhound of the Year

Nominations are now open for Pebble Pups / Juniors and Adults. Diane has a list of who has received the award for the last few years and will send the board the forms. David will bring copies to the next meetings, and Celia will send out copies with the newsletter. They are due 11/1/24.

#### Steve Miller Items

Steve's father passed away and David will pick up some items donated to the club. They include a faceting machine which we could keep or sell, and some compressed gas containers. David will check with Richard and the Oxnard club to see if they would like them.

### Old Business

#### 2025 Board

We need a nominating committee for new board positions. The committee will be 2 board members and 3 members at large. Erin and Celia are the 2 board members. Dick volunteered to be one of the members. Please respond to Celia if you are interested in keeping your board position

#### Tree Pruning

No progress.

#### Afternoon workshops

The final Autumn Afternoon workshop will be October 8<sup>th</sup>. We may bring them back in the spring.

#### Second Library Cleanup

This went well, over 300 titles were removed. They will be at Roctoberfest for sale, and the remainder given to Shirley to sell at the March show. A question was brought about our sets of periodicals. We aren't really sure what to do with them, we are trying to downsize. Maybe sell them as whole sets? We are going to hold off until the book cleanout is done.

#### 80<sup>th</sup> Year Pins

The pins have been ordered.

#### All-American Club

The book meeting will be October 9<sup>th</sup> at 1pm, the committee will be Celia, Erin, Jim, and David. Diane will advise.

### Officer Reports

#### 1<sup>st</sup> VP – Programs: John Cook

Thanks to Jim Brace-Thomson for last month's lecture on "Fakes & Phonies?" John is working on the October meeting. The November meeting is a silent auction, and December is our Holiday Party.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> VP – Field Trips: Tyrone LaFay

The October field trip will be to Clear Creek on October 11-13, sponsored by Conejo. They will be looking for plasma agates and serpentine. Remember to get your permits, and check for more info on <http://whoscoming.com/vgms/>.

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> VP – Show: Diane Cook

The first meeting for the March show will be 10/16 or 10/17. Michael will be selling shirts at the Gold Coast show Nov 16-17. Rene will have a table will activities for children. Troy will setup a sign up for volunteers on <http://whoscoming.com/vgms/>.

#### Treasurer: Lauren Wideman, Diane, Nancy

Lauren got the current state form, but there seems to be a problem. They will get that sorted out and then get money in a money market account and some CDs. Diane paid property tax bill, \$368.86. We may owe more for some supplementals. It is time to renew our insurance. The total for Directors and Officers went from \$275 to \$325 for the year. For property insurance we pay \$1,128 a year. If we stay at \$75,000, we will have to be re-endorsed, which maybe a problem due to the age of the building. We will try it and see. If not, we can still get the \$50,000 coverage, but that wont cover everything if anything happens. Diane will let us know at the next meeting what happens.

#### Web Master: Troy Schmidt

Terry put out signups up for Roctoberfest, she'll add setup and cleanup ones as well. Troy is keeping the website up to date.

#### Secretary: Sheri Hultman

Nothing to report.

#### Membership: Erin Valenzuela

Celia motioned to accept new members Kerri Stiles, Danielle Kwan, Taylor Paskin, Chrissy and Austin (pp) Felix, Chandler Giles and Hunter Smith (pp). Troy seconded. The motion passed. All have been vetted through Megan's Law and paid. We now have 206 adults, 37 pebble pups and 14 juniors (257 Total).

#### Federation Director: Jim Brace-Thompson

The CFMS business meeting will be held Nov. 8-11 in Visalia. The President of CFMS has sent out a notice about two National Monument areas that will affect rockhounding and is encouraging everyone to contact our congress person and make our opinions heard. Celia will send out that information to club members.

The AFMS show will be 3/27-3/31 in North Carolina. Diane says the CFMS is working on some options for the 2025 show, possibly attaching their meeting to a club show that is already going on. Could VGMS do the 2026 show?

Bulletin Editor: Celia Churchill

The deadline for the October bulletin is 10/10. Send articles or any questions to [vgmseditor@gmail.com](mailto:vgmseditor@gmail.com)

Parliamentarian/Scholarship: Nancy Brace-Thompson

Nancy starting reaching out to professors at UCLA, VCC, SBCC, and UCSB. She'll also put an article in the bulletin to encourage students to apply.

## Committee Reports

Pebble Pups: Lisa Batchelder-Hetrick/Erin Valenzuela

Dinofest was a very busy event. They toured the Gem and Mineral Hall, had a scavenger hunt, visited the dinos and listened to a speaker.

At Rocktoberfest, 10/27, Kylee will be teaching the pups to make terrariums. If not then, maybe the Holiday Party. If that does not work, then Lisa will have something else for the kids to do at Rocktober Fest. We have one (maybe 2) Pups to celebrate getting their Rock Hound Pin at Rocktoberfest.

For November we will maybe have a meeting or at least a Holiday Party. The party will be December 7<sup>th</sup>.

Lisa brought up questions about the rock tumbler. How are we handling supplies? The club will provide 1<sup>st</sup> timers supplies. Lisa said that she will have the Juniors to set up the grit bags.

A \$5 fee will be charged to help off set costs. The Stewards will check out the tumblers to people.

Ways and Means: Adrian Ruiz and Jenifer Russell

Nothing to report.

Museum: Troy Schmidt/Jim Brace-Thompson

Troy will bring a box for Roctobrfest and the silent auction.

Educational Outreach: Jim Brace-Thompson

Nothing to report.

Archivist/Historian: Jim Brace-Thompson

Nothing to report.

Clubhouse Search: Diane Cook

Diane is trying to find someone else in Parks & Rec who will respond to her about other properties that may be available through the county. She's also looking into possible grants.

Librarian: Heather and Robert Seaton

Thanks to everyone who came to the cleanup day- there's still more to do. Robert reported he has one more box of donations to look through.

Stewards: John, Ron and David

Nothing to report

Next Board Meeting

The next board meeting will be on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 7p.m. via Zoom.

Next Membership Meeting:

Wednesday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024, at 7:30 pm at the Poinsettia Pavilion.

Diane moved to have the meeting adjourned and Nancy seconded. The motion passed. With no further business, President David Springer adjourned the meeting at 8:38pm.

*Respectfully submitted on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024.*

*Sheri Hultman, Recording Secretary.*

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## *Thirty-seven Cases; Three Amigos*

JIM BRACE-THOMPSON

On September 17 John Cook and I once again saddled up the horses and hit the dusty trail north to Bakersfield to serve as judges for gems, minerals, fossils and lapidary arts at the Kern County Fair. Arriving at the fairgrounds, we corralled our horses with Wes Lingerfelt's of the Orcutt Mineral Society to round out The Three Amigos. Clipboards and scoresheets in hand, black sombreros flopping in the Central Valley breeze, and pencils drawn, for the next several hours we went case-by-case taking shots at all manner of rocky displays. Fortunately for The Amigos, the Kern County Fair only has case displays to judge (no individual items, as at the Ventura County Fair), so judging proceeds fairly quickly.

We've judged here many years now and saw the fair take

a real hit from the pandemic. Prior to Covid, we would have 40 to 45 displays to judge. That number declined to 21 in 2021, then crept up to 27 in 2022. Last year, the number went back down to 21. While low in quantity, high in quality. But this year the number bounced back up. We worked our way through 37 display cases. Like last year, folks offered beautiful self-collected rocks and minerals and well-crafted jewelry nicely arranged. It was especially cool seeing local material, like fossils from Shark Tooth Hill, a range of petrified wood and palm from the ancient Kern River channel, and other Kern County bounty.

Next year, in addition to checking out our own Ventura County Fair, consider visiting the many other county fairs across the state to see what neighboring like-minded souls are

up to. It may inspire ideas for a display of your own!



*The Three Amigos faced down display after display in sunbaked Bakersfield.*



*Several Kern County Fair displays earned 100%.*

## *Jim and Nancy's Great Adventure: Helping a Fellow CFMS Club in Monterey*

JIM BRACE-THOMPSON

September isn't September without a trip to Monterey! So on September 20th Nancy and I packed up the car and, with canine companion Tornjak, we headed north to the Monterey County Fairgrounds to participate in the 62nd annual show of the Carmel Valley Gem & Mineral Society. CVGMS was the first rock club we ever joined with two preschool kids back in the last century, circa 1991. (Those preschoolers are now ages 36 and 39 with preschoolers of their own and/or in the making.) We've remained CVGMS members all these years, and even after moving to Ventura in 1998, we've returned each year to help with the annual show—with the exception of a 3-year gap when the pandemic wreaked havoc on the club and its membership.

Like last year, when a rag-tag crew managed to pull it together, this year's show seemed a success despite last minute hiccups like the food vendor canceling and having to be replaced at a moment's notice and one dealer with a lot of reserved floor space phoning in with Covid. Although the show has become smaller, a steady (if not overwhelming) stream of attendees flowed all weekend long. The show included 14 dealers, 1 food truck, 36 displays (including impressive boulders of Big Sur jade, a fluorescent mineral booth, and 1001 cabochons), and several money-makers: \$5 admissions (yes, they charge admission for club shows up north), geode sawing, a silent auction, and a kids' area with spinning wheel, grab bags, fossil sifting, jewelry making, and pick-your-own tumbled stones.

As we've done for decades now, Nancy and I provided overnight security Friday and Saturday (cheapest room rate in Monterey!) and set up two display cases: California Spheres; Faces in Stone. We also promoted our 2025 VGMS Show with

flyers and ran the Silent Auction along with Sky Paxton. We seemed to do a good business with 20+ items out for bid each hour for 12 hours, and all items disappeared by the end of the show. Although we kept prices low, a couple primo pieces were put out each hour that would bring in up to \$60 or more. No tally yet, but last year's Silent Auction efforts brought in \$2,200.



*Nancy (and Tor) hard at work at the CVGMS Silent Auction.*

It's great fun going to other club shows and seeing local material that can be had at bargain-basement prices, either from mom-and-pop dealers or the club's silent auction. We



encourage VGMS members, one and all, to check out the many local shows sponsored by clubs up and down California.

After enjoying Sunday night in a real hotel tucked into the seaside forest and dunes of Asilomar, we had hoped to take the Coast Highway home on Monday through Big Sur country to pick up serpentine for the grab bags and possibly a jade pebble or two at Jade Cove or Willow Creek while allowing Tor to romp along the beach. But, like last year, a stretch of highway appropriately called Regent's Slide was closed due to a road collapse from last winter's storms.

All-in-all, it's a trip well worth taking, and we invite you to join us when we return in 2025. Enjoy both the show and the scenic touristy venue. By then, surely, we'll be able to work in that twice-delayed side trip to Jade Cove?



*Many great displays graced the Monterey Bay.*

## EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

# Wide Awake Once Again with Educational Outreach

Jim Brace-Thompson, Educational Outreach Chair

Educational outreach has been in snooze mode this fall, with few requests for our services from schools and other community groups, but that's about to end. We've just been invited by Chip Faulkner to set up a VGMS booth at Poinsettia Elementary School's Fall Carnival. The last time we participated was two years ago, when we focused on magnetic minerals. This time, I'm thinking California fossils.

If you can help in our booth, please let me know (jbra-ceth@roadrunner.com). The event takes place on the back lawns of Poinsettia Elementary School, 350 N. Victoria Avenue, Ventura, from 11am to 3pm on Sunday, November 17, with set-up starting between 9:30 and 10am. That happens to be the weekend of the Gold Coast Show, where VGMS will also have a booth. If just a couple folks can split some time between that show and the Poinsettia Carnival, we should be in good shape. In the past, this event has proven fairly low key and a lot more relaxed than a science night, so not a lot of volunteers are needed. We'll have specimens spread out on an 8-foot table for show-and-tell, our Dig-a-Dino sand box on the ground, and



*The Carmel Valley show in Monterey attracted rockhounds of all sorts.*

fossil shark teeth and California fossil flyers as hand-outs.

Looking to the future, I've also received a request from Nancy Aguilar from the Wheeler Gorge Visitor Center of the Los Padres National Forest for our participation in their annual Open House event, but that's not until May 3, 2025. More details to come as that opportunity firms up.



*Last time we participated with a booth at Poinsettia, we demoed magnetic minerals.*

## JUST FOR FUN

# Rockhound Holidays—If It's October, It's Time for National Fossil Day!

Jim Brace-Thompson

As Part Ten of our ongoing series on hobby-related holidays, I've found just one for the month of October, but it's one Jared, Erin, and David should rejoice in. Every year on the Wednesday of the second full week of tenth month comes National Fossil Day. That overly complicated calendrical permutation puts it on October 16<sup>th</sup> this year. It was initiated in 2010 by Vincent Stannuci of the National Park Service to encourage appreciation of fossils and paleontologists who study them. Only a ridiculously minuscule fraction of all life that has ever existed on planet Earth has been found as fossils. This is the day to get out and find one more!

The National Park Service sponsors things like a poster art contest to engage kids, and many national parks and museums offer fossil-themed activities for the whole family that might include holding real fossils from museum collections, viewing paleontologists at work prepping bones, and taking selfies with the likes of *T. rex* or *Smilodon*. Odd, though, that they should choose a work and school day for this celebration. Wouldn't Saturday be better? Then we could all get out into the field to find the fossil of a critter never before known to exist. Who knows? We might even find the next *Aegrotocatellus jaggeri*, the 440-million-year-old trilobite named for Mick Jagger. (The scientific name translates from Latin into "sick puppy Jagger." Hmm.) In addition to this ancient bug, the rock star has a 19-million-year-old "swamp pig" named after him: *Jaggermeryx naida*. It apparently had long gangly legs and a large muzzle with prominently mobile lips. Are paleontologists suggesting the living legend is actually a living fossil? Ask the one who also named a fossil snail after him: *Anomphalus jaggerius*.

Sadly, the only other holiday I have to celebrate this month is Be Bald & Be Free Day on October 14<sup>th</sup>. Either that, or National Grouch Day on October 15<sup>th</sup>. Then again, we all look forward to Halloween on October 31<sup>st</sup>. While his friends were

getting candy, Charlie Brown got a rock. Now that's worth celebrating!



*Join Sue at the Chicago Field Museum in celebrating National Fossil Day!*

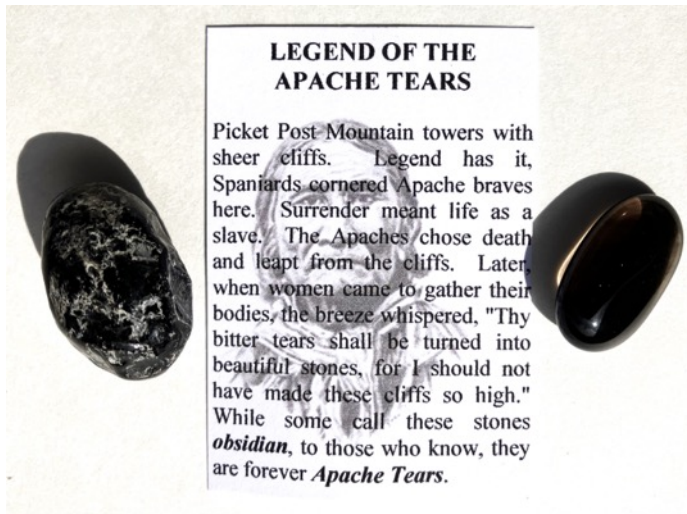
## Name that Specimen!

Jim Brace-Thompson

Our latest Challenge to Pebble Pups and Junior Members was for a stone with an Arizona legend. Skyla, Elizabeth, Graham, Otto H, Izzy, Gabby, Connor, Noah, and Otto O all successfully identified Apache Tears obsidian. Or, as Otto O said, "Obsidian, of course." They each received both a rough specimen and one that had been tumble-polished to a clear glassy shine.

To all VGMS Pebble Pups and Junior Members: take The

Challenge to test your knowledge while adding free mineral and fossil specimens to your collection. The Challenge is emailed to Pebble Pups and Junior members every three weeks. If you have kids in the club and you haven't seen The Challenge, alert me (jbraceth@roadrunner.com) to get you on the email list.



*We challenged kids this month with the legend of the Apache Tears.*

## Thank you!

Everyone who has helped make VGMS sparkle

### Please Submit Your Thank-Yous!

A reminder: This "Thank You!" feature welcomes submissions from all club members. Know of someone who has helped the club or individual members in ways large or small? Never waste an opportunity to tell someone you appreciate them! Send your appreciation to [vgmseditor@gmail.com](mailto:vgmseditor@gmail.com)

### Nominating Committee

Thank you to all who volunteered to join the nominating committee to seek officers for 2025 who will lead us into the future. To all club members: do like Chicago. Vote early. Vote often! –*Jim Brace-Thompson*

### Library Team

Thanks to the team devoting weekend days to working on our library holdings. –*Jim Brace-Thompson*

### David Springer

Thanks to David Springer for responding to a couple recent opportunities to retrieve rockhounding related items (including a faceting machine and supplies) for our club's use or disposition. –*Jim Brace-Thompson*

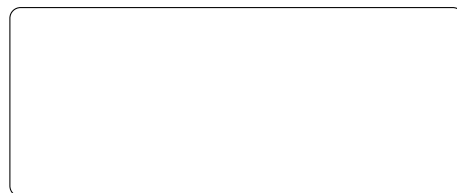
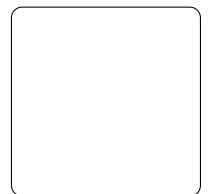


# CALENDAR

## October-November 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
13 October	14 Happy Birthday, Tony Hetrick and Harrison Tasoff!	15	16	17	18	19 Open Workshop: 9a -12p
20 Happy Birthday, Debbie Sander!	21	22	23 Member Meeting: 7:30 p.m. at Poinsettia Pavilion	24	25	26 Happy Birthday, Corey Accardo!
27 Rocktoberfest 9:30a-1p Happy Birthday, Renee Frisk-Jones and Adrian Ruiz!	28	29	30 Happy Birthday, Ben Irie!	31	1 November	2
3 Certified Members Workshop: 12-3pm Field Trip: Rainbow Ledge	4	5	6	7 Board meeting, 7 p.m.	8 Happy Birthday, Megan Hewitson!	9
10 Happy Birthday, Bill Allaway!	11 Happy Birthday, Susan Cowlshaw!	12	13 Member Meeting: 7:30 p.m. at Poinsettia Pavilion	14	15	16 Open Workshop: 9a -12p

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