

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

Volume 70 Issue 9

September 2024

INDEX

Join Us for Rocktoberfest!

Every fall throughout our 80-year history, VGMS has hosted a potluck picnic breakfast. Over time, it's come to be known as Rocktoberfest, and a fest it truly is! VGMS members and guests from neighboring clubs bring an array of dishes to add to the meal while off to the side, there's a general silent auction of rocks, minerals, fossils, lapidary rough, and the odd piece of jewelry or used lapidary equipment. There's also an auction just for kids, who can spend cash or their horde of Pebble Pup Bucks. This year, other fun events are being planned specifically for kids and junior members.

Off to the other side, in the parking area, we encourage anyone and everyone to lower a truck tailgate, open a car trunk, or set up a fold-out table for tailgating fun. This is the place to sell, offer, and/or swap with fellow tailgaters. Between the tailgate and the silent auction, be sure to bring plenty of cash.

The club will provide the basics (like eggs, bacon, bacon, and bacon), but we encourage everyone to crack open the family cookbook and bring along your favorite breakfast goodies in quantities to share, along with your own plates and table settings.

Rocktoberfest will be held on Sunday, October 27th at our VGMS clubhouse grounds (11969 N. Creek Rd., Ojai). We need volunteers to help set up pop-ups, chairs, etc. at 8 a.m. Breakfast is served at 9:30, Silent Auction 10:30-11:45, Tailgating 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. Clean-up and close at 1 p.m. Please RSVP if you are attending in any capacity at <http://whosbringingwhat.com/vgms>.



Hope to see you at Rocktoberfest!

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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 Website: 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://www.vgms.org)

January through October: 4th Wednesday of the month

November and December: 2nd 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://www.vgms.org)

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://www.vgms.org)

Open Workshop Day: 3rd Saturday of the month

Certified Members' Workshop: 1st 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

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

2024 Committee Chairs

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

LETTERS

President's Message

David Springer



We are at the end of summer, evenings are beginning to cool down a bit, and a new school year has started for our pups and juniors, and even some of our adults who are returning to our centers of learning. We experienced another pulse of membership sign ups thanks to our May AFMS/CFMS show and the August County Fair, keeping Erin our membership secretary busy, as well as John Cook who has been very busy getting our new members

interested in lapidary certified to use the club's equipment. Our \$5 Equipment Usage Fee process seems well understood by all, and we have lots of new wheels and a new disks for our flat lap to work with. This September we ended our Summer Nights program on our second Tuesday. Please remember to sign up on <http://whoscoming.com/vgms/> if you plan to use specific equipment at the clubhouse as the number of folks interested in using the available equipment has grown.

It is time to begin nominations for the next year 2025 board members and elected officers. It is also time to form a nominating committee and we need your help with this. Please consider volunteering as we need three non-board members to fill up our roster. The objective is to select club members to fill vacant positions. We are also taking nominations for "Rockhound of the Year" for VGMS. We offer this coveted award to both adults and to pups/juniors. If you know of someone who has gone "above and beyond" to help our club, please consider nominating them by completing the form and sending it in to my e-mail address (below). The form is available in the "members" area of our website, and will be included in the September Rockhound Rambler e-mail blast. Responses are due no later than November 1st so please do not delay!

We are planning to have our Rocktoberfest breakfast, October 27th at our club house. We will need help with set up, organizing activities, cooking the breakfast (and eating it of course), and clean up. Please sign up at <http://whosbringingwhat.com/vgms/> so folks planning to attend can sign up to bring special and tasty items to contribute to the morning feast (*i.e.*, lots and lots of bacon!). Activities will include the breakfast itself at 9:30 a.m., a silent auction starting at 10:30, and club member tailgating.

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, or by phone at 805-450-5025.

Let there be Rocks! David.

SOCGEMS PRESENTS
DISCOVERING HIDDEN TREASURE
 WITH LEGACY JEWELRY APPRAISER GINA WATSON, GIA

JOIN US WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2024, 7:00 PM
 AT THE SAN CLEMENTE COMMUNITY CENTER MULTIPURPOSE ROOM - 100 NORTH CALLE SEVILLE, SAN CLEMENTE
FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC - BRING A FRIEND!

JEWELRY AND GEM ROADSHOW

A JEWELRY, MINERAL, AND GOLD APPRAISAL EVENT
 Saturday, October 26, 10 am - 2 pm
 Laguna Hills Community Center

FAIR MARKET APPRAISALS

Gina Watson
 GIA-Certified
 Legacy Jewelry Appraisers

Walt Lombardo
 Geologist, Mineralogist
 Nevada Book and Mining

Appraisals are \$25 for up to five items of jewelry, minerals in hand, or photos

PROTECT - INSURE - DECLUTTER
ORGANIZE - GET CASH

Christopher Scarcella, Esq.
 Pack My Parents
 Jewelers Mutual
 Grasons Estate Liquidation Company



More Information and Registration at SOCGEMS.com
 or Scan QR - Presented by South Orange County Gem and Mineral Society

NEWS

Program Review and Schedule

John Cook, 1st VP – Programs

Program Review - Geology of the Channel Islands



On August 28th, 2024, our program was Ms. Keri Dearborn presenting "Geology of the Channel Islands, California". The Channel Islands off our coast provide a lot of interesting geology, faulting and fossils. Fossils included remains of the Pygmy Mammoth, ancient Manatees, etc... She talked about how each island had very unique geology due to faulting and how

some of the islands originated from Mexico and San Diego area. It was a great program describing a lot about the islands near Ventura.

I would like to thank Keri for sharing with us about the geology of the Channel Islands. If you have seen or know of any programs appropriate for our club meetings or if you would like to give a talk to our meetings, please let me know and I will be happy to contact them for future programs.



This Month - Fakes and Phonies

Our meeting for September 25th will be our very own Jim Brace-Thompson, talking about "Enhanced & Synthetic Gemstones: Fakes & Phonies". Over the years there has been many attempts to recreate precious and semi-precious gemstones. Some of the gemstones are created in laboratories, use of heat and radiation along with using synthetic materials. Some of the recreations, such as ruby, are difficult to tell what is real vs. fake. Jim will discuss many examples enhanced or synthetic gemstones currently out there and beware of "is it real of fake". This talk sounds like it will be very interesting and informative!



Field Trips

September Update

Tyrone LaFay, 2nd VP – Field Trips

Upcoming field trips for 2024:

– October 11-13 (Friday – Sunday): **Clear Creek** (north of Coalinga) for plasma agate and serpentine, led by the Conejo Gem & Mineral Club. This is an overnight trip that requires multiple permits (access per person and vehicle). A 4-wheel drive vehicle is recommended though not required, but a high clearance vehicle would be best. There is a portion of the road that is a steep hill climb and is loose sand where a 4x4 vehicle would likely perform best. All details including how to procure

permits are covered on <http://whoscoming.com/vgms/>.

– November 3 (Sunday): **Rainbow Ledge** for jasper-agate led by the Conejo Gem & Mineral Club. Located in the Mojave Desert, this is a claim run by the Indian Wells Gem & Mineral Society and the field trip is in conjunction with their annual Gem & Mineral Show the first weekend of November each year. Further details for this field trip are to be published on <http://whoscoming.com/vgms/> soon.

– December: No field trip...Happy Holidays!

The 2024 Ventura County Fair: A Success Thanks to Our Gem and Mineral Community

Diane Cook, Gem & Mineral Building Superintendent

Every August, the Ventura County Fair serves as a highlight for our gem, mineral, and jewelry enthusiasts. It's a unique opportunity for members to showcase their incredible collections and craftsmanship, with the added excitement of friendly competition. Over 12 days, the fair attracts nearly 300,000 visitors, many of whom are drawn to the stunning displays in the Gem and Mineral and Hobbies, Models, and Collectibles building.

I do not do this alone. It takes a village, my exceptional staff and many volunteers, worked tirelessly before, during, and after the fair to ensure that it was a fulfilling and memorable experience for all.

But the fair wouldn't be what it is without the passionate involvement of the local gem clubs. We are incredibly grateful to the following clubs for their enthusiastic participation and commitment: **Ventura Gem & Mineral Society, Conejo**

Gem & Mineral Club, and the **Oxnard Gem & Mineral Society.**

Your contributions not only strengthened our presence at the fair but also enriched the community by sharing your knowledge, talent, and love for gems and minerals with thousands of visitors.

To all the exhibitors, thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to prepare and participate. Your hard work and dedication are truly appreciated, and your displays left a lasting impression on fairgoers of all ages.

Participating in the Ventura County Fair is a significant form of community outreach, and we're proud to have such committed members. Together, we continue to inspire and educate the public about the fascinating world of gems and minerals.

Here's to another successful year, and we look forward to continuing this tradition of excellence in the years to come!

Workshop

The Dog Days of Summer Began with Few Pups...But Then a Full Pack Arrived!

Jim Brace-Thompson

The Dog Days of August began with few puppies up at the club's workshop studio but ended with a dramatic turn-around as a full pack came charging in.

Logging in on August 11th, Workshop Stewards David Springer and Tyrone LaFay set to work overseeing just four members: Rich Pisor, Belinda Poore, Julie Cox, and myself. We sure enjoyed lots of elbow room! Alyssa Carmen also arrived to look through the club library collection and to check out a few titles. I'm not sure if this is something to celebrate, but it is noteworthy: Belinda became the first VGMS member to pay the new \$5.00 workshop usage fee. This new fee is intended to help underwrite the cost of keeping our equipment maintained and in good working order under the pressure of ever-increasing prices for parts. Like a toll road fee, it's paid only by those who partake rather than a tax on all.

Stewards David Springer and Ron Wise logged in on the "Summer Nights" evening of August 13th to oversee members Shirley Layton, Rich Pisor, Belinda Poore, Michael Rittenberg, and myself. Once again, we pretty much had our choice of work stations and lots of elbow room.

Things took a turn and picked up for the last workshop of the month on August 17th. Stewards Ron Wise and David Springer lent helping hands to members Teagan Groh, Shirley Layton, Rich Pisor, Belinda Poore, Michael Rittenberg, Lonnie Sutton, and myself. Plus, two new members, Ryan Canon and Rebecca Moak, arrived to check out the clubhouse digs. Finally, there was a gathering of Pebble Pups and Junior Members working on activities toward earning the AFMS/FRA Mapping badge. As if that wasn't enough to fill up the clubhouse grounds, festivities didn't end with the morning. Workshop Steward John Cook helped Christy Stallcup get certified to use workshop equipment by learning how to craft a cab from start to finish.

I returned to a quiet clubhouse on August 18th to begin a winnowing of our library book collection. Just as they do in all libraries (except maybe the Library of Congress), we're "weeding" to remove books taking up shelf space that are deemed unessential for club purposes and member interests. The goal is to have a library that will be more easily organized and accessible and truly useful for our army of amateurs. We're targeting duplicate copies (especially of older books), old and outdated field trip guides, arcane textbooks from the 1940s, technical tomes from geological surveys, and such. The decommissioned books will be made available for sale to club members at upcoming meetings and silent auctions and then will go to the Country Store during our annual gem show next March. This whole process began as our board members grappled with a basic question: given space constraints, do we want an archive of every book ever published no matter how arcane or out-of-date or a living library that members find useful and helpful for their needs?

September 1st once again saw a full workshop with a lot of activity. Workshop Steward John Cook arrived in the wee morning hours to provide a certification session on cabbing for Ryan Canon, Janet Levy, and Alyssa Carmen. Stewards

Ron Wise and David Springer soon joined them before other members trickled in during normal hours to work on sawing, cabbing, and flat-lapping projects. These included Shirley Layton, Rich Pisor, Michael Rittenberg, Robert Seaton, Sheri Hultman, and me. In addition, Carrie Eller arrived to get introduced to our clubhouse digs and to see the workshop studio in action. After a slow start at the beginning of August, it was great to see more and more people joining the fun!



Belinda inaugurated our new \$5.00 workshop fee.



Ron repairs a Genie, illustrating why we need our new workshop usage fee.



Workshop attendance picked up on August 17th. All machines taken!



Sssshhhh! Work is in progress to winnow our library collection.



John filled out new certification paperwork for Ryan to join the cabbing brigade.



See what's being crafted in the club's workshop studio!

Federation News

Latest Reports from CFMS and AFMS

Jim Brace-Thompson, Federation Director

VGMS is one of about 100 clubs united as local member societies of the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies (CFMS). CFMS, in turn, is one of seven regional federations with about 600 clubs affiliated with the national American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS). Pretty much wherever you go in the U.S., there's a fun rock club not far away. In fact, if you go on the federation websites (<https://cfmsinc.org> or <https://www.amfed.org>), you'll find directories and links to our sister clubs. I've found this helpful when trying to get details on a local club show or when seeking advice on collecting sites and opportunities that may be in an area I'm visiting on a vacation trip.

As you've no doubt noticed the past couple of months, we've begun sharing the CFMS newsletter in electronic format as an email attachment to all members. We want to provide everyone with a convenient way to stay informed on developments beyond our local society. That said, here are some news items reported recently in both the CFMS and AFMS newsletters:

- Twice a year, a representative from each local society gathers for a Directors Meeting to conduct the business of CFMS, and the Fall Directors Meeting comes up November 8-10 in Visalia. I and several other VGMS members will be attending.
- There's to be a CFMS-sponsored field trip to the region around Lovelock, Nevada, on September 28-29. They'll be seeking quartz with hematite, magnetite, emerald crystals, petrified wood, and common opal. It may be too late to sign up now, but if interested, call Gene Doyle (408-605-9457; Eugene.doyle@sbcglobal.net) or Jim Barton (916-847-7321; geologist1@surewest.net).
- Are you interested in judging competitive exhibits at federation shows? There will be Uniform Rules judges training sessions overlapping with the Rocky Mountain Federation Show & Convention taking place October 25-26. Just one catch: you

have to travel to Oklahoma City to attend it!

- The AFMS Future Rockhounds of America program publishes a newsletter called *Crack the News*. It's by kids for kids, and the editor is seeking hobby related articles, field trip reports, poems, cartoons, photos or drawings, and/or Rockhound jokes from kids under the age of 18. Check out previous issues at <https://www.juniors.amfed.org>, where you'll also find instructions on how your kids can submit material to this national publication.

- Want to head to a local club show this fall? The CFMS Newsletter lists about 15, including a half dozen or so that are within very reasonable driving distance from Ventura (San Luis Obispo, Sept. 28-29; Long Beach, Oct. 12-13; Woodland Hills, Oct. 19; American Opal Society in Orange, Oct. 26-27; San Diego, Nov. 2-3).



Want to see how sausage is made? Attend the CFMS Fall Directors Meeting in Visalia!

Meeting Minutes

VGMS General Meeting, August 28th, 2024, at the Poinsettia Pavilion.

Attendees:

Called to order with a welcome and Flag Salute at 7:30pm PST, David Springer, Presiding (thanks for John Cook for covering last meeting). 7-7:30 was social time.

There were 34 members, 8 guests, and 1 speaker.

Announcements

Minutes

Erin Valenzuela motioned to approve the July 24th, 2024 minutes. Robert Seaton seconded. Motion passed.

Clubhouse News

Get your cash cards! The clubhouse is open Sunday 9/11 from 1-3pm, Saturday 9-12 from 9-12am. Tuesday 9/10 from 4-7:30pm will be the last evening workshop of the year.

Equipment for Loan

Both rock tumblers are on loan now.

Ventura Fair:

A reception for fair volunteers will be held 9/14 at 10am at the Santa Rosa Hall.

Tonight's Program

Carrie Dearborn gave a talk about the geology of the Channel Islands.

New Business

Nothing to report.

Old Business

Nothing to report.

Officer Reports

1st VP – Programs: John Cook

Carrie gave a wonderful talk. It was amazing the number of different geologic processes that can be seen on the islands. The September speaker will be our own Jim Brace-Thomson teaching us about fakes and phonies. It should be very informative.

2nd VP – Field Trips: Tyrone LaFay

The August 24th trip to the UCLA campus to see the meteorite lab was well attended. It is the 7th largest in the world, with specimens from the Moon and Mars! Our scholarship recipient goes to school there was happy to meet us and speak about the collection. Coming up, Clear Creek is an overnight field trip from October 11-13th. Make sure you get your permits- we will be looking for plasma agates, jadeite, and 100 other minerals that can be found in this area. See <http://whoscoming.com/vgms/> for more information.

3rd VP – Show: Diane Cook

Not present

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

Not present

Membership Secretary: Erin Valenzuela

There are 191 adult members, 28 Pebble Pups, and 14 Juniors for a total of 233. A lot of new members will be voted in at the next board meeting. In an unrelated matter, the documentary "Why Dinosaurs" will be at the Simi Film Festival on 9/6 at 3pm, and at the upcoming Ojai Film Festival.

Secretary: Sheri Hultman

Nothing to report.

Bulletin Editor: Celia Churchill

Thank you to everyone who has submitted articles to the bulletin. Now is the time to enter articles for next year's competition. The due date for the next bulletin is September 10th. Please send submissions to vgmseditor@gmail.com

Federation Director: Jim Brace-Thompson

The AFMS newsletter just came out, mostly about our May show. Next year's AFMS show will be in North Carolina. The CFMS business meeting is coming up on Nov. 8-10. The Rocky Mountain Federation is having their convention October 25-26, and are offering training if you'd like to be a judge. They are looking for a host for next year's federation show. The Roseville Rockrollers are doing a co-op field trip to Lovelock, NV September 28-29; more info will be in the newsletter.

Webmaster: Troy Schmidt

Not Present

Parliamentarian/Scholarship: Nancy Brace-Thompson

Search will be started soon.

Committee Reports

Pebble Pups: Lisa Batchelder-Hetrick & Erin Valenzuela

Celia generously taught mapping and compass skills at our August meeting. We are excited to have so many participants, and will be splitting up into Pebble Pups and Juniors meetings. This will let the Juniors go into more depth and give them opportunities to mentor the Pups.

We are excited to announce Rylee J. has completed all of the badges.

The September class will be about dinosaurs. Jared has connected us with some DinoFest people. In October Kylee will be leading a project.

Jim would like to survey the Pups and Juniors for a future article in Rock & Gem Magazine. AFMS has a newsletter for kids by kids, and are looking for entries. Please ask Jim about applications for the Junior Achievement Award.

Reach out to us at vgmspups@gmail.com if you have questions about the program, events, or helping out. No experience is needed!

Clubhouse Search: Diane Cook:

Nothing to report.

Educational Outreach: Jim Brace-Thomson

Jim has reached out to an Ojai home school enrichment group, Rocktreesky, but has not heard back. Poinsette Elementary School will be doing a Fall Festival and would like us to set up a booth there. More information to come.

Museum: Troy Schmidt & Jim Brace-Thompson

Nothing to report.

Ways & Means: Jennifer Russel

Made \$96 tonight.

Hostess: Susan Slyker

Thank you Michaela and Lisa Rittenberg!

Archivist/Historian: Jim Brace-Thomson

Nothing to report.

Librarian: Heather & Robert Seaton

Nothing to report.

Stewards: Ron Wise, John Cook & David Springer

Remember the new usage fees, get your cash cards.

The next members meeting is Wednesday, September 25th, 2024 at 7:30 at the Poinsettia Pavilion.

Robert motioned to adjourn the meeting and John seconded. The motion to adjourn passed.

Respectfully submitted on August 30th, 2024.

Sheri Hultman, Recording Secretary.

Meeting Minutes

VGMS Board Meeting, September 5th, 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, Shirley Layton, Jim & Nancy Brace-Thompson, Phyllis & Dick White, Erin Valenzuela, Lisa Batchelder-Hettrick, Tyrone LaFay, Lauren Wideman, and Troy Schmidt.

Nancy motioned to approve the minutes of the August 1, 2024 Board meeting as they appeared in the August bulletin. Troy seconded. Motion passed.

New Business

Rocktober Fest

This classic VGMS annual event will be held on Sunday, October 27, it will be a breakfast. Set up will start at 8 am, food will be served at 9:30 am and a silent auction will be held 10:30-11:30. Anyone wishing to tailgate can do so until 1pm. Troy will set up a Who's-bringing-what sign up. Dick will bring his stove and griddle, David will bring his Blackstone, and Jim & Nancy will bring their Coleman stove.

New Committee Chair

David suggested creating a separate Pebble Pup and Juniors Chair. Since it's a committee and not a board position, there's no need for a bylaws change. Jim will write up a new description

2025 Board

We need a nominating committee for the board positions, 2 board members and 3 members at large. Erin and Celia volunteered to be the board members.

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.

Evening Workshops

David brought up that many people don't want the Summer's Night workshops to end. He suggests we continue them as Fall Afternoon workshops, changing time to be from 2-5pm.

Endowment Donations

Jim motioned the club donate \$50 to AFMS and CFMS each for their endowment and scholarship funds for a total of \$200. Diane seconded, and the motion passed. \$25 will be in honor of Richard Bromser.

80th Pins

Erin and Celia will work on a potential design for the commemorative pin, and work out a cost to make them. We would plan to distribute them at the holiday party. A vote was taken through email and the purchase of the pins was approved.

All-American Club Book

David wants to do the book since we have won for quite a few years in a row. The committee will be Celia, Erin, Jim, and Davie. Diane will advise them.

Old Business

Tree Pruning

Diane will get a few quotes to have clubhouse trees pruned and forward them to the city, hoping this will move the process along. Erin will reach out to her brother-in-law, who works for the county in maintenance.

New usage fees

The new fee structure is going smoothly. Tyrone will work with Diane to revamp the new cash cards and print more.

Second Library Cleanup

This will be 9/28 at 9am. The committee will be David, Jim, Erin, Robert, and Heather (maybe). The plan is to continue weeding out older unused stuff. We will sell it at meetings and the show.

Swap Meet

Tabled for now.

Officer Reports

1st VP – Programs: John Cook

Thanks to Carrie Dearborn for discussing geology of the Channel Islands. At the Sept. 25 meeting our own Jim Brace-Thompson will speak on synthetic and enhanced minerals, i.e. fakes and phonies. John is working on the October meeting. The November meeting a silent auction will be held. The December meeting will be our Holiday Party

2nd VP – Field Trips: Tyrone LaFay

Lisa led the field trip to UCLA Meteorite lab on Aug 24, the trip was full. It was an amazing trip. No field trip is scheduled for September. However, CFMS and Roseville Rock Rollers is co-sponsoring a trip to Lovelock, NV. See CFMS newsletter for more information. The October field trip will be to Clear Creek on Oct 11-13, sponsored by Conejo. They will be looking for plasma agates and serpentine. For more information check <http://whoscoming.com/vgms/>

3rd VP – Show: Diane Cook

Meetings for the March show will start soon. The fair would like us to move to Santa Cruz, so another group can have both big buildings. When another event is going on at the same time, it brings up our attendance. The fair is willing to give us the Santa Cruz building at a cheaper rate if we move. A vote was called and everyone agreed to the move.

Treasurer: Lauren Wideman, Diane, Nancy

Lauren is getting our current state form and then they will continue to work on getting the club money in a money-market account and some CDs. Diane will pay the tax bill.

Web Master: Troy Schmidt

Troy will put out signups for the workshops and Roctober Fest.

Secretary: Sheri Hultman

Nothing to report.

Membership: Erin Valenzuela

We have 199 adults, 33 pebble pups and 14 juniors paid (246 Total). Erin motioned to accept the following as new members: Erin motioned to accept the following as new members: Robin Duffield, Laura, Jason, Lexi (PP) and Landon (PP) Stellino, Debra Cummings, Maegan Anderson Phaneuf, Benji Phaneuf (PP) and Poppy Phaneuf (PP), Kira and Leonard (PP) Grossi, Alexander Smith and Lilah Guerra. Troy 2nd. Motion passed. They have all been vetted and paid.

Federation Director: Jim Brace-Thompson

-CFMS business meeting will be held Nov. 8-11 in Visalia. If anyone has anything to report let Jim know- he will be delivering their check from the show. They are looking for nominations for their board for next year. All the deadlines for the competitions have been moved up, due to the early date of the federation show.

The CFMS field trip is 9/28-9/29 to Lovelock, NV. New committee chairs for CFMS are coming up, Jim is the rules chair, which does judging. Jim is looking for someone to join his committee. Check the CFMS newsletter for all the upcoming shows.

The AFMS newsletter was mostly about the May show. AFMS

is looking for articles, poetry, jokes, etc. from kids for their newsletter for kids. Next year's AFMS show will take place in the Eastern Federation. It will be the last weekend in March.

Bulletin Editor: Celia Churchill

The deadline for the September bulletin is 9/10. Send articles or any questions to vgmseditor@gmail.com

Parliamentarian/Scholarship: Nancy Brace-Thompson

Nancy starting reaching out to professors at UCLA, VCC, SBCC, and UCSB.

Committee Reports

Pebble Pups: Lisa Batchelder-Hetrick/Erin Valenzuela

September 21st will be the field trip to the L.A. Natural History Museum to attend Dino Fest. Oct. 27 at the Rocktoberfest Kylee will be teaching the pups to make terrariums. Nov. maybe a meeting or just having a Holiday Party.

There are lots of Juniors now and would like to make activities for them specifically. Rock tumbler will now have a log located next to the tumbler and have a 2 month loaning period.

Ways and Means: Adrian Ruiz and Jenifer Russell

Nothing to report.

Museum: Troy Schmidt/Jim Brace-Thompson

David traded with a gentleman in TX, they could be used in the museum or put in the silent auction. Troy and Jim will go through several boxes that have been sitting around.

Educational Outreach: Jim Brace-Thompson

The only thing coming up is the fall festival at Poinsette Elementary School.

Archivist/Historian: Jim Brace-Thompson

Nothing to report.

Clubhouse Search: Diane Cook

Diane is still working several options.

Librarian: Heather and Robert Seaton

The second cleanup day is September 28th at 9am (see Old Business).

Stewards: John, Ron and David

Thanks for the forms getting rocks cut. Ron fitted the wheels for the Genie.

Next Board Meeting

The next board meeting will be on October 3rd, 2024, at 7p.m. via Zoom.

Next Membership Meeting:

Wednesday, September 25th, 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 8:56pm.

Respectfully submitted on September 9th, 2024.

Sheri Hultman, Recording Secretary.

Members Teaching Members, Part 2

JIM BRACE-THOMPSON

We all know about our formal classes to certify members in how to use club equipment for making cabochons and for flat lapping. But as I noted at the beginning of the year, many individual members are also happy to share still more skills with one-on-one lessons or mini-workshops.

For instance, last March, Nancy and I welcomed Michael and Lisa Rittenberg, Celia Churchill, and Erin Valenzuela to our dining room table for lessons with precious metal clay and PMC paste to create pure silver pendants from natural objects. Then, during the Ventura County Fair and at our September 1st workshop, I gave another round of lessons to Sheri Hultman, who crafted a silver pendant from a Jurassic fossil ammonite.



Sheri puts a fine shine on her newly crafted silver ammonite.

Other members have happily shared their skills in lapidary arts and metal work. Ron Wise has given knapping lessons

up at the clubhouse for many years to craft arrowheads from obsidian. Richard Slyker has taught fellow club members the basics of silversmithing in his home workshop. Phyllis White has given my wife Nancy lessons on wire wrapping, while Dick White (with Rylee) demonstrates soft-stone carving at shows and the county fair. And David Springer has provided services to turn that boulder of lapidary rough languishing in your backyard into a gleaming sphere. If you have a skill, offer to share it with other members, either at your home or up at the clubhouse. If you'd like to learn a skill, get to know your fellow members, observe their work at our shows, and ask about a lesson. Need a skill? Learn a skill! Have a skill? Share a skill! Rockhounds teaching Rockhounds. It's a virtuous circle.



Over the years, Ron has taught many members the basics of knapping with obsidian.

A Serendipitous Encounter

HARRISON TASOFF

I had the good fortune to meet members of our sister club in Calaveras county last month while driving through Angels Camp on a long leg of a roadtrip. What a welcoming group of nuts!

I set out early that morning from UCSB's research center near Crowley Lake. My drive brought me past Mammoth Mountain; I followed the Inyo Craters up to Lee Vining and around Mono Lake. I was greeted by a warning when I turned off 395 at Sonora Junction: "Steep 26% uphill grade", it said. I wasn't able to verify that claim during the drive; highway engineers seem not to bother adding the grade percent to signs if it's over 11%. It's just a semi on a triangle with the phrase "trucks use low gear". It might as well say, "good luck".

I've never been on a windier road in my life. Definitely glad

I took some meclizine beforehand. I took most of the ascent in third gear, and when told an upcoming curve was 10mph, you best believe I listened. I stopped to stave off vertigo at a turnout between Chipmunk Flat and Baker Campgrounds. A plaque there started out:

"Driving from Highway 395 to Sonora, California might take you four hours. In contrast, in 1852, the first pioneers struggled across this section of the Sierra Nevada for 35 days!" <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=99562>

I reflected then on the ruggedness of the terrain. The sheer cliffs, jagged peaks, and improbable route that folks had to find to pass through the great Sierra. Although I was cruising through, certain of making Sacramento before nightfall, these mountain passes were deadly. Coastal California

was something of a citadel before the 20th century: deserts slowed any approach from the south, while a traveler from the north met the ramparts of the high Sierra. The only other access came by braving California's formidable moat by circumnavigating Cape Horn.

I did eventually make it through the pass, and stopped on the North side of New Melones Lake as I made my way toward Sacramento. I wanted to find some neat pyrite cubes, but instead found that the mine is very much still privately owned.

Disheartened, I headed over to Angels Camp and made a stop in Stories in Stones, the town's mineral and fossil shop. Their selection is good, even if their prices are a bit high, and I was able to purchase a specimen of that selfsame pyrite from Carson Hill that I had sought not an hour before.

I had one more stop to make before Sacramento: a visit to the Stifle Claim north of Placerville. I had dinner arrangements with my brother and his new girlfriend, so time was of the essence. I dialed in the coordinates and headed up highway 49.

About five minutes out of town, the pickup in front of me slowed to turn into a dirt drive. Nothing remarkable, but I noticed the sign for the Calaveras Gem and Mineral Society. "Neat", I remarked to myself as I passed by.

Then I thought, "If that fellow just turned into the property, I bet there's more folks there right now". A quick Google search confirmed that the club meets every third Sunday, which is exactly when I happened to be passing through.

I pulled a U-turn and headed toward the clubhouse. The friendly children playing outside informed me that the meeting was almost over, and I thanked them for their counsel. I opened the door, not quite knowing what to expect. I was greeted by a quaint meeting room flanked by two rows of picnic tables. A kitchen sat at one end and a fireplace with a bespoke stone mantel at the other.

I explained who I was to a lady by the door and was immediately announced as a welcome visitor from down south. The gathered club members sang our praise for running a fantastic AFMS show and showed me around the premises once the meeting had concluded. I regaled everyone with the serendipitous story of my day as they told me about the Carson Hill Mine, showed me the renovations they're making to the property, and shared various colorful anecdotes. They've just started their "juniors" program, and I told them about VGMS's vibrant Pebble Pup program.

Eventually enough folks had trickled out that I thought I'd best be moving on. Still, I snapped a photo with Bob, Brad, and Pat and went on my way. I ended up with a bit less than an hour at the Stifle Claim before I had to depart for Sacramento, but I think the detour was worthwhile.



My Great Year at the VC Fair

KAYLEE T., JUNIOR MEMBER

This year at the Ventura County Fair, I entered my first mineral case in the youth competition. I chose to collect calcite because it comes in a multitude of different formations, colors and varieties! I had 15 different specimens in my case, all from different locations across the globe. One of my favorite specimens is a sandwich calcite from Minas Geras, Brazil. Not only does it fluoresce brightly, it is a more uncommon formation, being a flattened form of calcite. I was thrilled to learn that my calcite case had won the best youth mineral case plaque!



In addition to entering a case in the gem and mineral department, I also entered art in the youth building. I entered both 2D and 3D works, many of which were in my favorite media: ink. One of my terrariums, depicting an aquatic scene with miniature handmade sharks and fish circling a rose quartz reef, won best in show this year! I was awarded a trophy plaque for the undersea terrarium and almost all of my other art pieces earned first places.

I also entered a market rabbit pen in the small livestock department. These were the fourth generation of Californian rabbits I've bred and raised since 2019, and they earned me third place, although another pen of rabbits I bred, shown under

another exhibitor, won the reserve champion award. In rabbit showmanship, I won the senior grand champion showmanship buckle by half a point! The best part of the rabbit showmanship competition was when some of the VGMS club members came to watch and support me!

This year at the Ventura County Fair was a blast and I'm already thinking of a new case for next year's competition!





JUST FOR FUN

Rockhound Holidays—The Month to Collect and Pet a Rock!

Jim Brace-Thompson

As the next part of our ongoing series on hobby-related holidays, I've found two that rock the month of September.

National Pet Rock Day is the first Sunday in September. This year, that's September 1st. The Pet Rock craze perfectly fits the dictionary definition of "fad." It burst onto the scene at a San Francisco gift show in April 1975, saw over one million Pet Rocks sold, and was oh-so-yesterday by 1976. It was a marketing scheme, pure and simple, cooked up by marketing

executive Gary Dahl, who became an instant millionaire by offering plain old rocks on a straw nest packaged in a box with air holes along with a care manual. No feeding. No walking. No vet visits. No pooping. Plus, they never die. The easiest pet in the world! While the fad ended as quickly as it started, Pet Rocks attained true cult status, and in 2012, National Pet Rock Day was established, briefly providing a new wave of interest while encouraging even more folks to adopt a rock and celebrate the unconditional love and loyalty it brings.



The original Pet Rocks came on a bed of straw in a box with holes for air.

Collect Rocks Day was first celebrated in 2015 and is held every year on September 16th to celebrate Earth, geology, and all manner of rocks to be found wherever you live. No one seems to know who started it or why, but we are all urged “to indulge your inner geologist.” That might be by going on a collecting field trip, visiting a museum’s geology collection and gift shop, or relishing a bowl of Rocky Road ice cream

while listening to songs like “Rocky Raccoon” and “We Will Rock You” or binge-watching Sir David Attenborough’s entire 11-part “Planet Earth” series. Rather than hang your head in shame, proudly proclaim yourself a Rockhound. Heck! Go on eBay and buy a vintage Pet Rock for only \$50—or best offer...



Let no one tell you that you can't collect rocks at Mussel Shoals on Collect Rocks Day!

Name that Specimen!

Jim Brace-Thompson

We have two Challenges to report on this month for Pebble Pups and Junior Members. The first involved a “diamond that’s not” in the form of Pecos Diamonds quartz crystals from the region of Roswell, New Mexico. Perhaps due to family summer vacations, participation continued to be down for this one. Just three lucky winners: Beatrice, Skyla, and Joey. As noted, these “diamonds” come from Roswell, where an alien spacecraft is rumored to have crashed in 1947. (Of course, the U.S. government claims it was just a weather balloon, but we know better!) In keeping with that alien encounter, when she sent her winning reply, Skyla included a couple of alien-related jokes. Question: How do aliens pay for coffee? Answer: They use Starbucks! Question: What is a rocket’s favorite chip? Answer: A rocket chip! Thank you, Skyla, for providing comic relief while reminding us what really landed at Roswell!

The second Challenge was for soapstone, which Dick White and Rylee famously carve while demonstrating lapidary arts at gem shows. Connor, Gabby, Izzy, Ian, Otto, Colin, Grayson, Oliver, Shea, Wren, Dashel, and Skyla all successfully identified it. They can thank Dick and Phyllis for their specimens. In fact, when they sent their answer, Oliver and Shea pointed out, “The Dick White clue gave it away!”



We challenged kids this month with a “diamond that’s not” and a block of soapstone.

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.

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? Share a pat on the back! In the words of William James, "one of the deepest principles in human nature is the craving simply to be appreciated." Send your appreciation to vgmseditor@gmail.com

Dick and Phyllis White

Thank you to Dick and Phyllis White for providing soapstone specimens for our name-the-specimen Challenge this past month and to Diane and Kevin Grizard for Pecos Diamond quartz crystals. –*Jim Brace-Thompson*

Diane Cook

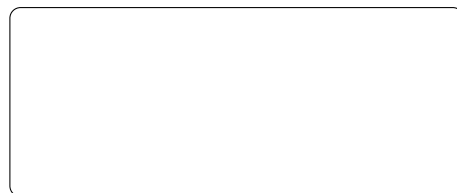
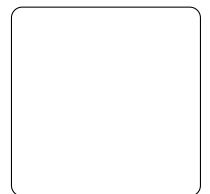
Thanks to Diane Cook for her pin designing work. –*Celia Churchill and "the pin people"*

CALENDAR

September-October 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
15 September	16	17	18	19 Happy Birthday, Peter Drew!	20	21 Pebble Pups Field Trip NHMLA
22	23 Happy Birthday, Kyle Luker!	24	25 Member Meeting: 7:30 p.m. at Poinsettia Pavilion	26 Happy Birthday, Otto O.!	27	28 Happy Birthday, Stuart Bloom!
29 Happy Birthday, Shayla Krufft!	30	1 October	2	3 Board meeting, 7 p.m. Happy Birthday, Erin Valenzuela and Henry I.!	4	5 Happy Birthday, Sara Gibson!
6 Certified Member's Workshop 12 - 3 p.m.	7	8	9 Happy Birthday, Arielle Nathanson and Beecher I.!	10 Happy Birthday, Denise Rosen!	11 Field Trip: Clear Creek	12 Field Trip: Clear Creek

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