

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

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Dr. Jonathan Hoffman gave an informative and entertaining talk last month. Join us at our monthly member meetings!



This month, we look back at Dr. Jonathan Hoffman's engaging talk on "The Life and Legacy of Geologist Thomas W. Dibblee, Jr.," as well as the lively and well-attended Rendezvous and a workshop day with an unexpected guest: a curious snake at the clubhouse! Movie lovers will enjoy a review of the latest Jurassic Park installment, and we tag along on a field trip to the iconic "Batcave" in Griffith Park, where geology meets Hollywood history. And don't forget, the Ventura County Fair runs from July 30 - August 10, with many fabulous displays by members in the Gem & Minerals building.

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): \$10 each

Children ages 6-18: \$10 each, with adult member

Children ages 5 and under: free with adult member

Regular Meeting

7:30-9:30pm at the Poinsettia Pavilion

Santa Paula Room, 3451 Foothill Rd., Ventura, CA 93003

January-October: 4th Wednesday of the month

November-December: 2nd Wednesday of the month

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

Board Meeting

7pm via Zoom

First Thursday of the month

Members who wish to attend may write to info@vgms.org to request the Zoom link.

Field Trips

Announced in the bulletin and the regular meeting.

RSVP for field trips at whoscoming.org/vgms

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 Rd., Ojai, CA 93023

Open Workshop Day: 3rd Saturday of the month

Certified Member's Workshop: 1st Sunday of the month and 2nd Wednesday of the month

Federation Affiliation

California Federation of Mineralogical Societies (CFMS)

Permission to Reprint

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Photo of the month credit

Photo of the month provided by John Cook

Club Colors

Blue and gold

2025 Elected Officers

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

2025 Committee Chairs

Ways & Means	Jenifer Russell
Museum	Jim Brace-Thompson and Troy Schmidt
	Heather Seaton and Robert Seaton
Library	Jim Brace-Thompson
	Susan Slyker
Historian	Erin Valenzuela
Hospitality	Lisa Batchelder-Hetrick
Pebble Pups	Robert Seaton
Junior Rockhounds	John Cook, Tyrone LaFay, David Springer, and Ron Wise
Facilities	
Stewards	

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

David Springer

We are definitely in the middle of summer as the days have warmed up. This is a perfect time to select more beach locales versus desert locales for your rockhounding and also consider visiting museums to get your fill enjoying rocks, minerals, and fossils. We have 16 lucky members signed up to do just these two things on July 20th, to Ralph Bishop's garage museum in Santa Maria then off to Avila Beach to hound for the rare rock we call Deedeeite. For those of you who will miss this opportunity, there are lots of beaches to comb and museums to appreciate throughout our great state, so we hope that you take advantage of these other numerous venues.

This is also the season for preparation for the Ventura County Fair. Exhibit drop-off and set-up dates are from Friday, July 18 - Sunday, July 20th.

This is a wonderful community event to participate in and you will find lots of VGMS members' goodies on display. The Gem & Minerals building is also in need of volunteers during the fair. If you are interested, call Diane Cook at (805) 889-1209. During entry days, there will be a sign up sheet available for you to fill out. For every 4 hours of volunteer work, you will receive free entry to the fair that day.

I am 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.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Monika Blackburn

Is there something you would like to see in the bulletin? If you have any articles, photos, or comments, please email me: vgmseditor@gmail.com.

And please note, if you have something club-related to sell, let me know and I can include it in the bulletin. As always, thank you for reading!

See you at the VC Fair! July 30 - August 10



The Ventura County Fair is just around the corner!



Have you volunteered your help in the Gems & Minerals Building? If not, contact Diane Cook today.

PROGRAM REVIEW & UPDATE

John Cook, 1st VP – Programs

Our June 25, 2025, meeting program was presented by Dr. Jonathan Hoffman, curator of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History Geology and Paleontology Departments. Jonathan discussed “The Life and Legacy of Geologist Thomas W. Dibblee, Jr.”

Tom Dibblee’s career spanned seven decades and he covered (walked and mapped) nearly a quarter of the state of California - some 40,000 + square miles. He mapped in detail major faults, strata, fossils, complex geologic structures, sites for oil exploration, and more. Tom was armed only with a pencil, a field notebook, and sometimes a handy aerial photo, which he used to vastly increase our knowledge of the subsurface geology and resources of Central and Southern California. Tom’s remarkable memory, coupled with being able to see subtle details in rock strata with complex bedding structures, allowed the mapping of many major faults including the San Andreas. His valuable and exhausting work laid the framework for our knowledge of subsurface geology where we live. I would like to thank Jonathan for an interesting insight into a remarkable man and his legacy.

Future Programs

July Program: Diamonds in North America

This month’s speaker will discuss diamonds found in North America and how recent discoveries have made **Canada a world leader in diamond production**. The talk will cover how to identify diamond-bearing rocks and minerals, known diamond fields in the U.S., and areas with future potential—including **right here in California!**

Our speaker, **Walter Lombardo**, is a geologist with over 35 years of experience in mineralogy, mining, and mineral exploration. Don’t miss this chance to learn from an expert!



Our June program featured Dr. Jonathan Hoffman of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History providing a wonderful biography of preeminent geologist Thomas W. Dibblee.



Accompanying his talk, Dr. Hoffman shared Dibblee memorabilia, including the President’s Volunteer Action Award presented by President Ronald Reagan for field mapping work Dibblee conducted in the Los Padres National Forest during his “retirement” years.

If you would like to present a club program or have seen and/or know of any programs appropriate for our club, please let me know and I will be happy to include or contact your suggestions for future programs.

Rockhound Rendezvous 2025

Jim Brace-Thompson

What day was June 14? Flag Day...Military Parade Day...Trump's Birthday...No Kings Day. Call it what you will, VGMS members called it our day for a Rockhound Rendezvous! And rendezvous we did for our annual spring picnic that's been a decades-long tradition enshrined in our official club By-Laws. The sign-up sheet recorded a whopping 56 attendees, including adults and kids and several guests.

Per usual, a potluck potpourri was brought in by one and all, centered around Dick White's classic pulled pork and home-brewed bar-b-que sauce. But before we lined up to partake, we enjoyed a parade of award announcements from the CFMS Convention. (See last month's newsletter for the many awards earned by VGMS members.) Between bites of lunch, folks participated in both a kids-only silent auction and a general silent auction that brought in a nice sum for the club treasury. I didn't hear if we sold either of the two second-hand rock saws that were on offer, but the last time I was at the clubhouse, I only saw one of them still in the saw room.



Several members received Federation awards during Rockhound Rendezvous 2025.



The silent auction provided quality rough at bargain-basement prices.



The potluck feast featured too many goodies to fit on one plate—so I came with two!

The Rendezvous was rounded out by good old-fashioned tailgate sales from truck beds, car trunks, and tables in the parking lot. I don't know how others made out, but I raked in quite the haul. Here's my trajectory from past tailgates: \$3...\$18...\$37... and now? \$51.80! I'd better be careful. With this kind of serious money, the Internal Revenue Service may start paying attention. I hope everyone else made out equally well and, more importantly, had fun. I know I did!



It was a banner year for some at our Rockhound Rendezvous tailgate.

FIELD TRIPS

Tyrone LaFay, 2nd VP – Field Trips

Upcoming Field Trips (all field trips are subject to change):

- July 20, 2025: Ralph Bishop's Museum & Avila Beach
 - Ralph Bishop: tour of an extensive museum collection and possible rock sales in Santa Maria.
 - Avila Beach: collecting DeeDeeite at low tide.

WORKSHOP HAPPENINGS

For Summer Fun, Our Workshop Studio Is Hot!

Jim Brace-Thompson

Last month, part of my workshop column seems to have been inadvertently omitted, so this month's will be a tad longer, starting with that omitted content. But first, a word of advice to folks attending workshops. Our studios are proving ever more popular—and populous—which puts available stations at a premium. Be prepared with a back-up plan. If you were thinking of grinding and polishing a cab, you might find every Genie occupied, so bring some slabs to trim in the saw room until a Genie opens up. And to everyone: be prepared to share. Double up on a Genie and take turns with one person using the rough grinding wheels and the other using the sanding/polishing wheels. Working together, we make fun happen!



On June 11, our clubhouse had a gnarly guard on duty!

Our May 17 workshop day was moderately attended with Stewards David, Ron, and Tyrone overseeing 8 members. Heather Seaton also arrived to continue efforts with the library collection. Plus, we enjoyed a bonus: a little tailgate action for those with cash on hand. June 1 saw the studios bursting at the seams. Two couples arrived early as Shop Steward John Cook provided certification sessions for Michael & Terral Matsumoto and Kevin & Diane Grizard. Then, as the clock struck noon, many others arrived to take up stations. Shop Stewards Ron and David oversaw 14 members in all, making it elbow-to-elbow at every available machine.

On June 7, Steward John Cook gave certification lessons to Holly Green to welcome yet another newcomer into the craft of slabbing and cabbing. On our regular Wednesday, June 11 date, we held a clubhouse clean-up session, both inside and out, starting 1:00 followed by lapidary work at 3:00. One crew encountered an unpleasant surprise in the form of a baby rattlesnake that suddenly emerged from within the pile of leaves they'd been raking. Beware! This was the fourth rattler I've seen around town this spring, so they're out in abundance this year. Those carefully avoiding the rattler while arriving for lapidary work included Shop Stewards Ron and David and a total of 10 members. Many participated in the clean-up as well as the lapidary fun.

June 21 ushered in the first full day of summer. With other Shop Stewards hitting the road for rock shows up in Oregon, John had his hands full overseeing 9 members. Heather also arrived to continue club library work. Our Fist-Sunday-of-the-Month Workshop on July 6 proved busy with Stewards Ron, David, and Tyrone overseeing 11 members. Not all were there for lapidary work; for instance, Troy Schmidt tended to the museum then joined me in the library room, where I was doing a bit of research in our club archives. Our "Summer Afternoons" workshop on July 9 allowed for a bit more elbow room among attendees, with Stewards David and John overseeing 8 members.



Lowell wears a reminder on his chest of why he came to the clubhouse.



Slabs could be had at the May 17 workshop's mini-tailgate.



Come to our workshop studios prepared with a variety of projects.



Folks grabbed spots at a very full June 1 workshop.



Find your Zen at the clubhouse studios!

Members taking advantage of the fun our studios provide over workshop sessions since May 17 included Bill Allaway, John Cook, Julie Cox, Val Dart, Emily Delatorre, Steve Dulla, Lowell Foster, Holly Green, Diane & Kevin Grizard, Sheri Hultman, Kristin Kennedy, Tyrone LaFay, Shirley Layton, Michael & Terral Matsumoto, Steve Mulqueen, Rich Pisor, Michael Rittenberg, Heather & Robert Seaton, Richard Slyker, David Springer, Lonnie Sutton, Robin Tan, Judy Weigand, Ron Wise, and myself. If attendance like this keeps up during the summer months, we're gonna need a bigger boat!

FEDERATION NEWS

Camp Paradise Workshop Still Has Openings

Jim Brace-Thompson, VGMS Federation Director

Every summer, the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies (our umbrella organization) sponsors workshops in the rustic forested setting of Camp Paradise in the far northern reaches of our state. This year those workshops include silversmithing (beginning, intermediate, advanced), lapidary (beginning, advanced), soft stone carving, wire wrapping, wax casting, enameling, beading, chain maille, cold connections, gem trees, and stained glass.



Want to try your hand at silversmithing? Sign up for CFMS workshop sessions at Camp Paradise!

Two week-long sessions are offered. This year, Session 1 extends August 17-18, and I understand that all available slots are currently filled. But fear not! Session 2 is August 24-30 and still has slots available. Registration info is on the CFMS website (<https://cfmsinc.org/>), with a sign-up deadline of August 2, so if you are interested, hurry! The cost (which includes room, board, and workshops) is a bargain at \$550 per person per week. Some additional fees for materials may apply depending on the class (for instance, silver work). Questions? Call Jill Atkins at (775) 232-6626 or Ann Marie McCann at (949) 292-8167.

Believe it or not, while Nancy and I have been involved in this rock club thing going back to 1991, we've never attended Camp Paradise. Well, that's about to change! We're registered for Session 1. Watch for a full report, along with photos and results of our projects in the September newsletter.

MEETING MINUTES

VGMS General Meeting, June 25, 2025, at the Poinsettia Pavilion

Called to order at 7:30 PM PST, David Springer, Presiding
7:00 PM – 7:30 PM was social time.

Welcome and Flag Salute

Attendees: Tonight's meeting was attended by 44 members, 1 Junior, and 1 guest.

Robert Seaton motioned to accept the minutes from the May 28 General Meeting as printed in the bulletin. Leslie Cox second. Motion passed.

Announcements

- Clubhouse open, the first Sunday 7/6 (12-3 pm), the 2nd Wednesday 7/9 (3-6 pm) and fourth Saturday 7/26 (9-12 pm). Note the change to the fourth Saturday, due to Fair move in.
- Thank you to everyone for coming and making the Rockhound Rendezvous so much fun.
- Purchase your equipment usage card from Celia.

Old Business

- 6" trim saw has been sold.
- 10" (\$350) & 12" (\$700) power saws are still for sale. Both can take larger blades.
- We need to keep looking for a new location for a clubhouse. If you have any leads, please let David know.

New Business

- David is organizing a club case for the upcoming Ventura Fair. The theme is "What do you like about being in a rock club?" David is looking for items from members to include in the case. Please put as much information about the item as you can.

Officer Reports

- 1st VP - Programs - John Cook
 - Tonight's meeting was a presentation from Jonathan Hoffman, "The Life and Legacy of Thomas W. Dibblee Jr." Tom was an amazing man! His maps have made a huge impact.
 - In July, we are expecting a talk from Walt Lombardi.
 - In August, we will hear about sea monsters from Kai.
- 2nd VP - Field Trips - Tyrone LaFay (absent; David reported)
 - July 20, field trip will be to Avila Beach to collect DeeDeeite (brecciated rhyolite) and visit Ralph Bishop's house. Currently the trip is full, but if interested, please get on the wait list.
- 3rd VP - Show Chair- Diane Cook
 - We had our first show meeting. We will have another meeting in Sept. 17 at 7 pm. If you would like to join the committee, please let Diane know.
 - The Ventura Fair is coming up in July and August. If you have some time to help out in the Gem & Collectible Hall, let Diana know. For every 4 hours you get a free admission to the Fair.
- Membership Secretary - Erin Valenzuela
 - 193 Adult members, 37 Pebble Pup and 13 Juniors for a total of 243.
- Treasurer - Celia Churchill
 - Buy your usage cards.
 - If you have any receipts please turn them in.
- Secretary - Sheri Hultman
 - Nothing to report
- Bulletin Editor - Monika Blackburn (absent, David reported)
 - Deadline for next bulletin is July 10, send to vgmseditor@gmail.com.
- Federation Director - Jim Brace-Thompson
 - Nothing to report.
- Web Director - Troy Schmidt (absent)
 - Clubhouse date was wrong in whoscoming, but Terry fixed this at the meeting.
- Parliamentarian/Scholarship - Nancy Brace-Thompson
 - Nothing to report.

Committee Reports

- Pebble Pups - Erin Valenzuela
 - Did not have a June meeting.
 - Thank you, Jim, for doing the silent auction at the Rockhound Rendezvous.
 - The July meeting will be on July 26th at 10 am at the Fair. We will work on our Showmanship Badge.
- Juniors - Lisa Batchelder-Hetrick (absent, Erin Valenzuela reported)
 - Nothing to report.
- Ways and Means- Jenifer Russell (absent, Erin Valenzuela filled in):
 - Thank you, David, for the donation! Always accepting donations.
- Museum - Troy Schmidt (absent, Jim Brace-Thompson Reported):
 - Nothing to report.

Committee Reports cont'd.

- Educational Outreach - Jim Brace-Thompson
 - No events scheduled.
 - Jim is working on getting some new science night activities together, namely one on sand.
- Hostess - Susan Slyker
 - Thank you to Shirley and Debbie for snacks this month.
- Librarian - Heather (absent) & Robert Seaton
 - Heather is still getting the books organized.
- Facility Maintenance - Robert Seaton
 - Thank you to everyone who came out and helped clean up.
 - Next project is getting the new lights in the saw room and the cross beam up.
 - Reminder it is mouse season at the clubhouse.
- Stewards - Ron Wise, John Cook, Tyrone LaFay and David Springer:
 - David is getting the new arbor's water system set up. It should be up and running soon.

Next members meeting is Wednesday, July 23, at 7:30 at the Poinsettia Pavilion.

Robert Seaton motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 pm. Julie Cox 2nd.

Respectfully submitted on June 27, 2025, by Sheri Hultman, Recording Secretary.

VGMS Board Meeting, July 10, 2025, via Zoom

Called to order at 7:00 PM PST, David Springer presiding

Attendees: David Springer, John & Diane Cook, Sheri Hultman, Robert Seaton, Shirley Layton, Dick & Phyllis White, Erin Valenzuela, Jim & Nancy Brace-Thompson, Celia Churchill and Monika Blackburn

Nancy Brace-Thompson motioned to approve the June 5, 2025 Board Meeting minutes as they are printed in the bulletin with one correction: Mike Castdid should have been Mike Havstad. Celia Churchill seconded. Motion passed.

Old Business

- David will resend the email asking for all passwords and sign ins for the club accounts. Jim as Archivist will keep the list.
- David posted a power saw on craigslist for \$475.
- David and Ron will meet with jade expert, Ryan Spangler next Tuesday.
- Erin will get a sample of the hat and a visor to show the board.

New Business

- David and Loni repaired a tumbler. David had a possible buyer. Reminder, we have a space in the bulletin to put items for sale from the club and members. Please contact vgmseditor@gmail.com for placement in the bulletin.
- Jared contacted David about the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology; they run a Bird Museum in Camarillo. They are possibly interested in selling or having us sell things on their behalf at our show. It wasn't very clear; David is going to follow up to get more information. Jim mentioned that they had in the past done an open house where they sold off rock material they had.

New Business cont'd.

- David and Diane will compile a list of what keys people have and what keys they need. Diane will keep the list and get the keys that are needed.
- Rocktober Fest. will be held on October 18.
- Erin is working on Dino. Fest. tentative date October 11.
- Robert brought up that Nancy Booth has a rock collection she wanted to donate to the EP Foster Library. The library is not interested, so Robert gave the phone number to David to follow up on.
- Jim will get a new acorn barnacle for the library to replace the one in the fossil kit they loan out.
- David and Jim will get together next week to work on the club's case for the Ventura County Fair.

Clubhouse Search: Diane Cook

- David is going to find a new chair for this committee. Once we have a new chair we will get a written plan.
- We should reach out to the county and city to see if they have any other options available.
- Diane will touch base with Art Lopez to see if he has any political contacts.

Officer Reports

- 1st VP - Programs - John Cook
 - The July meeting will be Walter Lombardo, something new.
 - For the August meeting John will try to arrange a talk about sea monsters of the Mesozoic.
 - David suggested that we post our upcoming topics on social media, Facebook or Meetup or the like to boost attendance. We might outgrow our room.
- 2nd VP - Field Trips - Tyrone LaFay (absent, David reported)
 - The July 20 field trip will be to Avila Beach to find Deedeeite and a stop at Ralph Bishop's house in Santa Maria. Currently it is full.
- 3rd VP - Show- Diane Cook
 - The committee had a show meeting on June 24.
 - The postcard was approved. Great new design!
- Treasurer -Celia Churchill
 - Celia emailed the budget report to the board.
 - Celia has filed for a seller's permit.
 - She will be looking into getting a business license.
 - 2 property tax bills have shown up. We have not seen them before. Celia was told we can file as a non-profit to be exempt from paying. She will do that and possibly get refunds for past paid taxes.
 - Our CD matures at the end of August. Celia will bring some options to the next board meeting as what we can do with that money.
- Secretary - Sheri Hultman
 - Nothing to report.
- Web Director - Troy Schmidt
 - Needs to put up show cards, Diane will send him a digital copy.
 - Will post July program and workshop dates for August.
- Membership Secretary - Erin Valenzuela
 - Erin Valenzuela motioned to accept new members; Daniel Jordan, Rebecca "Bec" Tucker, Lauren & Zoe (PP) Obregon, Rhoi-Glen Carpena, Paul Didomenico and Joseph Epley.
 - Sheri Hultman seconded. The motion passed.
 - After the above were voted in, we have 199 Adult members, 38 Pebble Pups and 13 Junior members. Total 250 members.

Officer Reports, cont'd.

- Federation Director - Jim Brace-Thompson
 - Camp Paradise is still accepting applications for the second week of camp (8/24-8/30).
- Bulletin Editor - Monika Blackburn
 - Deadline for newsletter is the 10th of the month, vgmseditor@gmail.com.
- Parliamentarian/Scholarship - Nancy Brace-Thompson
 - After this board meeting the committee to update By-Laws and Regulations will meet.

Committee Reports

- Pebble Pups - Erin Valenzuela
 - July 26 meeting will be at the fairgrounds. We will work on our Showmanship Badge and hand out some earned badges.
 - Aug 24 meeting we will work on the new Sand Badge. Jrs. who would like to earn this badge are invited to join the Pebble Pups. Jim has some resources to share with Erin.
 - Jim suggested a field trip to the Griffith Observatory to get Field Trip Badge and Earth and Space Badge.
- Juniors - Lisa Batchelder-Hetrick (absent)
 - Nothing to Report.
- Museum - Troy Schmidt
 - Repaired a broken fish fossil.
 - Cataloged a few specimens.
- Educational Outreach - Jim Brace-Thompson
 - Gave his Fakes and Phonies talk to the Conejo club.
 - Jim is adding some hands-on activities to the Dino. Science night theme.
 - Jim is also creating a science night theme about sand.
- Historian/Archivist - Jim Brace-Thompson
 - Nothing to report.
- Librarians - Heather (absent) & Robert Seaton
 - Nothing to report.
- Clubhouse Maintenance: Robert Seaton
 - Thank you to everyone who came out and helped clean up for the Rockhound Rendezvous.
 - Reminder that it is mouse season.
- Stewards - John, Ron, Tyrone, and David
 - Ron added extenders on the genies. He also oiled them and the titan.
 - David is going to send a few used Nova wheels to be resurfaced. He has heard good reviews.

Nancy Brace-Thompson motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 pm. Erin Valenzuela seconded. The motion passed.

Next Board Meeting: August 7, 2025 at 7 pm.

Next Membership Meeting: July 23, 2025 at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted on July 12 by Sheri Hultman, Recording Secretary.

ROCKHOUND RAMBLINGS

Movie review by Erin Valenzuela

Jurassic World: Rebirth

It's been a very long time since I went to a midnight showing of a movie so you know I was genuinely excited to see the new *Jurassic World: Rebirth*. I have been waiting since the trailer dropped at last year's Super Bowl- and my excitement grew with the early cast announcements of Scarlett Johansson, Jonathan Bailey, and other great names.

Rebirth is not a reboot of the series, but rather a continuation of the stories and themes that carry through from the last three Jurassic World movies. It was directed by Gareth Edwards with help from legacy Jurassic Park players- executive producer Steven Spielberg and screenwriter David Knapp (who co-wrote the 1993 screenplay with Michael Crichton.) And that creative continuity flows through the movie.

The film takes place five years after *Jurassic World: Dominion*. The novelty of dinosaurs has worn off, they are dying, and zoos and natural history museums are closing. The plot centers around a ragtag group of mercenaries, a Pharma rep, and a charming paleontologist, who are on a mission to collect dinosaur DNA for a pharmaceutical company who plans to "help humanity" with supposed heart meds.

Here lies my only big problem with the movie... they need three large dinosaurs- one land, one sea, and one air species. The problem? Only one of them, *Titanosaurus*, is actually a dinosaur. *Mosasaurus* and *Quetzalcoatlus* aren't dinosaurs- they are prehistoric marine and avian reptiles. Most movie viewers won't be worried about this detail, but it bothers those of us who care about the science.



Along the way, the crew rescues a family that was on a sailing vacation and gains a cute sidekick: Dolores the *Aquilops*. The island where the dinosaurs live was a black-site lab for the original Jurassic Park, where they carried out mutant and hybrid experiments. The new "monsters" include *Distortus rex* (an alien nightmare inducing carnivore with too many arms) and *Mutadon* (basically a flying raptor, kind of like pterosaurs but gone very wrong). Expect all the classic Jurassic chaos: chase scenes, dinosaur-on-dinosaur battles, jump scares, human snacks, and stunning jungle landscapes. Some scenes were a bit over-the-top, but that's part of the franchise's charm. The samples are procured, the good guys make it home in the end, and, of course, dinosaur blood might just save humanity.

I felt the themes of profits vs people and humanity's impact on nature were very relevant and relatable today. It was honestly heartbreaking to see dinosaurs and museums treated as outdated in this world—especially for those of us who love both.

My favorite moment? The Valley of the Titanosaurus. It gave off strong Jurassic Park vibes—majestic, quiet, and filled with awe. The film is full of nods to the original trilogy: flares, rearview mirrors, “Crichton middle school,” and even a faded banner in a derelict museum.

I'd also recommend checking out the behind-the-scenes content. There's a great mini-doc on Peacock, plus interviews and cool park tie-ins at Universal Studios. Director Gareth Edwards went old-school and shot on film, which gives the jungle sequences a rich, cinematic nostalgic feel.

And one of my favorite details: Jonathan Bailey, who plays Dr. Henry Loomis, plays the clarinet and was invited to perform with the orchestra on the score! He was given a solo which plays during a key emotional scene where Dr. Loomis touches the Titanosaurus - I may have cried a bit. And yes, the score is beautiful and pays a wonderful homage to John Williams' original themes.



Overall, I really enjoyed *Jurassic World: Rebirth*. It is a great new chapter in the Jurassic Park/World universe and I can't wait to watch it again to catch more Easter eggs and grumble about dinosaur accuracy!



June Adventures in Silver Picking

Jim Brace-Thompson

Definition. Silver Picking: collecting rocks not with a rock pick but by using the silver in your wallet to pick from material assembled for you.

Club members enjoyed two recent opportunities to wield the silver pick. Oxnard Gem & Mineral Society has not held a gem show since the COVID outbreak in 2020. Plus, the city parks building where they had their workshop suffered fire damage and has been out of service for several years. That workshop space used to provide a significant revenue stream via classes OGMS provided in coordination with Oxnard Parks & Rec.

Thus, the club is suffering financially, so on June 21, OGMS offered members of the tri-clubs of Ventura County the opportunity to silver pick from their club rock pile in a member's yard up in the Foothills district of Ventura.

Nancy and I dropped by in the early afternoon hours to find Michael Rittenberg already bent over a pile. As we bent over, too, searching our way through piles and 5-gallon buckets overflowing with rocks, Stuart Bloom also appeared. As our visit drew to a close with only nine modest specimens at the bottom of my

bucket and a half dozen or so in Nancy's, I thought we were getting off cheap—until Nancy requested I hand over my wallet and lend my back to load a big opalized tree stump into our car trunk. Oh well. We were there to support a neighboring rock club in need, so I suppose that made it all right? Still, I wish Nancy hadn't kept my wallet.



Nancy and I joined Michael in silver-pick mining at the OGMS club rock pile.

For our next adventure, Steve Wolfe of Wolfe's Gems & Jewelry issued an impromptu invitation to several VGMS members to visit his new warehouse facility the very next day. Steve is a well-regarded fixture at our club show, the Gold Coast shows, the county fair, and other shows up and down California. He and his father before him have long been favored dealers. About a dozen members took the drive to Huntington Beach, with Nancy and me carpooling with Michael Rittenberg.

We found a spacious hall waiting for us—not as big as the overwhelming warehouse where Jewel Tunnel Imports used to host their annual Christmas-season weekend sales, but just right to enjoy several hours romping through material displayed on shelves and rummaging through material displayed on shelves and rummaging through flats stacked three feet high. While Steve has increasingly focused on cut gemstones, he still has an impressively diverse array of material, from fossils to polished agates, mineral specimens, petrified wood rounds, and more, including designer and decorator pieces. I don't think anyone went away empty-handed. (Plus, I finally got my wallet back from Nancy.) A big thank-you to Steve, who gave attendees a 30% discount while generously throwing in a flat of specimens for our July Monthly Challenge for Pebble Pups and Juniors.



A fun crew enjoyed fun times at Steve Wolfe's new warehouse facility.

Seeking—and Finding—the Curious Ventura Meteorite (Or part of it!)

Jim Brace-Thompson

In something of an impromptu personal field trip, on July 3 Nancy and I journeyed to Griffith Park in Los Angeles, in the shadow of the Hollywood hillside sign. Our goal? To see and photograph The Ventura Meteorite. Fellow VGMS members may recall that Alan Sailer gave a nice meteorite presentation at our July 2024 meeting. In it, he briefly noted a meteorite had been found right here in Ventura. Ever since, I've been curious to learn more about our hometown meteorite and have been compiling info toward an article for Rock & Gem magazine. The more I learn, the curiouser and curiouser it gets.

I learned that since 1987 (or is that 1971?) it's been officially housed at the Griffith Observatory in a display case devoted to California meteorites, so I was determined to see it, and see it we did. It turned out to be much more impressive than I had imagined. It was discovered on the beach, so I was expecting a small rusty rock corroded by sea-salt air. Instead, it's a nice big solid specimen (half of a specimen? a third of a specimen?) that's been cut and etched to show a lovely Widmanstätten cross-hatch pattern. Check it out! It's in a great display in a great facility for anyone interested in rocks from space. In fact, I highly recommend this as a field trip destination for our Pebble Pups and Juniors who wish to earn their Earth in Space badge. Should this happen, let me know, and I can try connecting us with the curator to get some personalized attention.

Meanwhile, stay tuned for more about The Ventura Meteorite. The more I've been learning about it, the more mysteries emerge, mysteries I hope to resolve in the event that I'm able to meet the very person who discovered it back in 1953. Or was that 1955? Or was it actually her mother (or her sister?) who discovered it? Mysteries still to be resolved. Curious.



The Ventura Meteorite is one handsome and impressive rock!



A page from the Star-Free Press of 1985 residing in the archives of the Museum of Ventura County proved invaluable during my research regarding The Ventura Meteorite.

VGMS HISTORY

[A Return to Bronson Canyon & the Batcave](#)

Jim Brace-Thompson, VGMS Historian/Archivist

On the way home from a recent visit to the Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles, as Nancy and I drove parallel to the bottom of Griffith Park, I noted we weren't too far from the Batcave. "The bat what?" asked Nancy. Griffith Park is home to Bronson Canyon, which was once extensively quarried for rock to build roads in the quaint little hamlet of LA. There's a Bronson Avenue leading to the quarry, and as we came to a stoplight, I noticed a right turn would take us directly up that avenue. (A while back, a young would-be actor also noticed that road sign upon arriving in Hollywood. Thus, Charles Buchinsky became Charles Bronson.) In the quarry is a tunnel straight through a mountain—a tunnel from which Batman and Robin would drive their Batmobile whenever the Bat-Signal beckoned.

Driving to the end of Bronson Avenue and then up Canyon Drive, we found the Bronson Quarry up an easy well-marked trail just 0.2 mile from a parking lot in a pleasantly shaded picnic area. There was the quarry. There was the Batcave. The surroundings seemed eerily familiar. Perhaps because this little canyon and tunnel have appeared in nearly 100 movies and 40 TV series? These include mostly westerns (The Lone Ranger, Rawhide, Little House on the Prairie, Bat Masterson, Gunsmoke) and Sci Fi thrillers (from Star Trek to Flash Gordon, Atom Man vs. Superman, They Saved Hitler's Brain, and Wonder Woman). Apparently, proximity to Hollywood made it a conveniently cheap and easy movie set.

But no. It wasn't the movies and TV shows that made the locale eerily familiar. Suddenly, I remembered! Within our club archives are 35mm slides of a field trip our club took to this very canyon. Back home, I found a slide from 1964 that I had digitized, and during the next club workshop day, I repaired to our library room and did a deep dive into our VGMS archives. There, I found a report by Field Trip Chairman Charles A. Bunch and Carlton



Head to Bronson Canyon and see the Batcave for yourself!

M. Carson about a June 22, 1964, field trip led by Carlton to Griffith Park with 16 other members and guests to enjoy both the Griffith Observatory and what was then called the Pacific Electric Quarries. "An important lesson to be learned from this trip," wrote Carlton, "is that Sunday is the best day not to go to Griffith Park."

I don't know if collecting is allowed today within the park boundaries—or if it was allowed back then, for that matter—but collect they did. However, you had to be a real connoisseur to appreciate the available specimens, which were said to be zeolite minerals in tiny vugs in the rock. Carson reported "several good specimens of analaine [did he mean analcime?] and natrolite were found...but no griffithite, sad to relate....Someone will have to go to the Griffith Park Museum and knock a corner off from their specimen so we will know what it looks like." If collecting is allowed, perhaps this could make for a convenient return field trip visit—but not on a Sunday!



Heading into Bronson Canyon, July 2025. (Notice the prominent dark cliff face.)



VGMS members inside Bronson Canyon, June 1964. (Same dark cliff face.)

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

Sharing with Other Clubs & Preparing for the Next School Year

Jim Brace-Thompson, Educational Outreach Chair

At the June 12 meeting of the Conejo Gem & Mineral Club, I gave their evening program with my PowerPoint presentation “Enhanced & Synthetic Gemstones: Fakes & Phonies, or the Real Deal?” The 30-some members in the audience seemed to enjoy the talk, although there were occasional gasps of surprise and disappointment from those who suddenly realized the brilliant pink agates they purchased at their last gem show were likely dyed. Also, some had wondered why their “turquoise” bead necklaces left blue stains around a sweaty neck on a hot summer day. Good old howlite and Ti-D-Bol!

With schools out of session and no requests yet to help at any summer camps, I’m currently spending our low-activity summer months on maintenance (for instance, making a new club volcano) and developing new ideas for educational outreach and science nights. This includes exploring ideas for making our Dino Booth more hands-on and activity-based and crafting a whole new Sand Science booth. When schools are back in session, we’ll be ready!



On June 12, I was the program-provider at the Conejo club's June Meeting.



For anyone who ever doubted it, there is still a use for newspapers. Meet our new club volcano before (a) and after (b)! This volcano is nothing but a paper tiger.

PEBBLE PUPS

Erin Valenzuela, Pebble Pups

We didn't have a meeting in June but a lot of pups and their families attended the Rendezvous. We are always grateful to Jim Brace-Thompson for providing a Pups/Juniors-only auction for that event. Many Pebble Pup bucks were spent! Our July meeting will be held on July 26th, at 10 am, in the Gem and Mineral building at the Ventura County Fairgrounds. We will be working on our Showmanship badge, doing a scavenger hunt, and discussing upcoming events. Please rsvp on the Band app for more details. I will also be handing out badges that day, so if your pups can't attend, we'll plan to get them to you soon. Also, an FYI, our August meeting will be Sunday, August 24th, 1 pm, at the clubhouse. We would love all the Juniors and Rockstar members to join us that day as we earn the new Sand Badge!



Kids enjoyed a silent auction just for them, with many items starting at just a buck—with Pebble Pup Bucks accepted.

The Monthly Challenge: Calcite Rhombs for the Monthly Challenge

Jim Brace-Thompson

Our Monthly Challenge for May involved calcite rhombohedrals from the old lead mining district of Darwin, California, which has been visited by both myself and David Springer. Those Pebble Pups and Juniors who successfully took up the Challenge and thus earned specimens of their own were Skyla, Quinn, Otto, Landon, Lexi, Bowie, Ryan, Connor, Wren, Dashel, Noah, Oliver, Shea, Izzy, and Gabby. Bowie took the time to check this one out via the website of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History to confirm it. Way to go, Bowie!

To all club members: Do you have material you can donate for future Challenges? Crystals, minerals, rocks, fossils—I'll take them all! We would need between 12 and 20 quality specimens small and sturdy enough to be sent via the mail, along with info identifying what they are, where they came from, how old they are (if a fossil), and so forth. Thank you to Rich Pisor for making a recent donation that kids will be trying to solve as a Challenge in August, and to Steve Wolfe of Wolfe's Gems & Jewelry for donating a flat of specimens for our ongoing July Challenge.



Last month, kids successfully taking up the Monthly Challenge added calcite rhombs to their collections.

To all VGMS Pebble Pups and Junior Members: Take the Monthly 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. If you have kids in the club and you haven't seen the Challenge, alert me (jbrace@roadrunner.com) to get you on the email list.

CLUB BUSINESS

THANK YOU

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? Everyone loves praise. Look hard for ways to give it to them. Send your praise to vgmseditor@gmail.com.

from Jim Brace-Thompson

Thank you to Steve Wolfe of Wolfe's Gems & Jewelry for donating a flat of specimens to use in our Monthly Challenge for our pebble pups and junior members. To all club members: shop Wolfe's Gems & Jewelry! Thanks, as well, to Rich Pisor, who donated a nice sampling of specimens that his father collected in northern California in days gone by.

Thank you to all members who have been assisting, working, and displaying at the Ventura County Fair.

CLUB CALENDARS

07 JULY 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	Celia Churchill Diane Cook 3	4	Jason Stellino 5
Member Workshop 12-3p Chris Churchill 6	7	8	Member Workshop 3-6p 9	Quinn S. 10 Board meeting, 7p	11	12
Annabelle W. 13	14	15	16	Beatrice B. Monika Blackburn 17	18	Janelle Thompson 19
Aiko Lambert 20	Susan Lopez Charla Murry 21	Nick Hughes 22	23 Member meeting, 7:30p	Shannon Riley 24	Landon S. 25	Open Workshop 26 9a-12p Lucia H.
Jake Bailey Nancy Brace-Thompson 27	Brett Hilton 28	29	VENTURA COUNTY FAIR 30 July 30- August 10	31		

08 AUGUST 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					VENTURA COUNTY FAIR 1 July 30- August 10	2
Member Workshop 12-3p 3	4	5	6	7 Board meeting, 7p	8	9
10 Bulletin Articles due	11	12	13 Member Workshop 3-6p	Sheri Hultman Jacquelyn Lam Judy Weigand 14	15	Open Workshop 16 9a-12p
Diane Grizzard 17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	Lisa Rittenberg 25	Rylee J. 26	Member meeting, 7:30p 27	Art Lopez 28	Justin Waller 29	30
Scott Barash 31						