

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

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Time to Celebrate the Holidays Together!

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Cut slab of possible Olivine material showing its translucency. Read all about the trip to Clear Creek where this specimen was found inside this issue.

Our club will celebrate another successful year of rockhounding fun at our annual Holiday Party. On December 10 at Poinsettia Pavilion, we'll have a potluck dinner, holiday gift exchange, awards, and the installation of our 2026 Board. Set-up begins at 6p.m. and dinner begins at 6:30. We hope to see you all there!



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 Tyrone LaFay

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**David Springer**

Tempus fugit, or in English, time flies! Looking back at 2025, it has been another wonderful year full of activities and events, camaraderie and competition, awards and accomplishments - we have so many reasons to be proud of who we are. I for one am honored to have been your president for the past two years. It has been both a fun and rewarding experience and I thank you all for trusting me to assume this role. We continue to have a very successful public outreach program, a robust and lively Pebble Pups program and growing Juniors program, and our membership has grown to over a whopping 260 persons...which I believe to be a club record. I suppose it is a good thing we do not all show up at once! We remain one of the most prestigious clubs in the nation with respect to the quality of our exhibits, the quality of the articles written by our members, and of course the sheer number and categories of awards won by our members, Pups through adults. I would add to that the quality of our members - the volunteerism within our club is really something to behold. A special shout out to all those who serve as demonstrators during our various Rock and Gem shows and at the Ventura County Fair. This is where literally days are spent by our volunteer members engaging others by demonstrating a special skill, be it soft stone carving, beading, wire wrapping, lapidary cabochon creation, Dino art- you name it, our members have it covered. Talk about dedication!

Heading into 2026, we still have a primary challenge to meet as a club, and that is to find a new clubhouse to move into. The ideal place will have sufficient parking, space for storage, utilities including electrical power, water, and a bathroom facility, and sufficient indoor space for our equipment, library, and museum. It doesn't have to be fancy (i.e. Camp Comfort is very "lived in"), but a location in Ventura is preferred if at all possible. There is power in numbers so the more members we can get to engage in this quest the better our prospects. Please feel free to share any solid leads with either myself, Jim Brace-Thompson, or Art López.

We hope to see lots of our members at our Annual Holiday Potluck Party on December 10th (the second Wednesday, NOT the fourth Wednesday!), starting at 6:30 PM at Poinsettia Pavilion. It is a great way to finish out the year and we always have a fun time. There will be drawings, prizes, Christmas and club trivia, and the food is always the best! We'll be in the larger room and will be doing a gift exchange for those who wish to participate. Signups for the potluck are on whosbringingwhat.com/vgms.

This message brings wishes of a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all. May you share in the joy of the season with your loved ones and perhaps find or acquire a few killer rock specimens while you are at it. Looking forward to an amazing 2026 year for VGMS!

Let there be (lots more) Rocks! David.

**EDITOR'S NOTE****Monika Blackburn**

Thank you to everyone who contributed time, energy, and ideas over the past twelve months. Your involvement is what keeps this newsletter meaningful and our community thriving. As we turn the page to a new year, I look forward to reading about all the great adventures that lie ahead.

Wishing you and your loved ones a peaceful, joyful, and inspiring holiday season. Thank you for reading!

PROGRAM REVIEW & UPDATE

John Cook, 1st VP – Programs

The October 22, 2025, club meeting program was “Fossils Collected in the Santa Susana Mountains in Southern California,” presented by Mr. Duke Mulholland. Duke was an exhibitor at the recent Ventura County Fair and won first place for his fossil collection of the Santa Susana Mountains. Mainly nearshore aquatic fossils can be found there, along with petrified wood and some fossils of terrestrial animals. The fossil remains are of early Miocene period (30 mya) and are found in rhyolitic tuffs (Topanga Fm) and beach sandstone of the Vaqueros Fm. Duke showed a video of his 30-year quest for fossils in that area. Duke had many examples of specimens he had collected and identified. I would like to thank Duke for giving us an enthusiastic and interesting talk.



Our October speaker shared fossils collected not so far from home!

At our November 13, 2025, club meeting at Poinsettia Pavilion, we hosted our semi-annual silent auction. We had raw specimens, cut and polished slabs, a variety of rough specimens, agates, large materials, and fossils and minerals from donations that VGMS members could purchase at the auction. Thank you to everyone who attended, brought great goodies, and purchased silent auction material.

Future Programs

December Program: Holiday Party

There will be no formal program for our upcoming club meeting on December 10. Instead, we will have our annual Holiday Party. Doors open at 6pm to start laying out the holiday bounty, and we will eat at 6:30pm. The party will include a Gift Exchange for anyone interested. Bring a gift of \$15-20 in value that should be rockhound-related, if you choose to participate. Participation is not mandatory. Please understand that this is not a white elephant gift exchange with gag gifts. Your gift should have something to do with our hobby. Pups will have their own party on December 7, so there will not be a separate kids' gift exchange. All Pups and Juniors are welcome at this party. We will also present awards, including Rockhound of the Year, and the meeting will also have the installation of 2026 officers.

January 2026 Program

Our annual “Show and Tell” where club members will tell of the rockhounding adventures they went on in 2025. Details to follow in the January 2026 Bulletin.

February 2026 Program

March 2026 Show preparation.

If you want to do a program or have seen or know of any programs appropriate for our club, please let David Springer know and he will be happy to contact them for future programs.

Thank you,
John R. Cook

Rocktoberfest 2025

Jim Brace-Thompson

The big event at our clubhouse and workshop space this past month? Rocktoberfest! A potluck picnic breakfast. A silent auction of rocky wonders for all. A silent auction just for kids. Tailgate sales and swaps. What wasn't to like when we gathered on October 18 for our annual Rocktoberfest celebration? The only things missing (fortunately) were the umpah-umpah tubas and the lederhosen. Alas, no Hefe Weissbier.

Great weather prevailed with sunshine flooding happy faces. Erin tells me 56 people attended (plus Tor). To tempt folks (and Tor) to the food area, Dick White filled the air with flavorful aroma at the bacon station. The club provided basics of bacon, eggs, and flapjacks, but the real feast consisted of all the goodies individuals brought to share. I doubt anyone went home hungry.



The Rocktoberfest silent auction once again helped relieve overstuffed wallets.



Although we lacked fine German beer, we weren't at a loss for fine food during Rocktoberfest 2025.

All that food under the pop-up serving station was necessary to fortify us for the silent auction, which, I'm told, brought in just half of last year's haul. Is it the economy? Was it the rocks? Or were the initial bid prices perhaps too high? Things to ponder for future auctions.



Kids enjoyed a silent auction of their own, with Pebble Pup Bucks accepted!

At the opposite end of the property sat trucks and cars with tailgates down, trunks open, and folding tables set up for good old-fashioned tailgate sales. I don't know about others, but I came away happy. I earned a whopping \$43. That's up from \$37 last year. Hey! Maybe I can make a business out of this rock

thing, after all. Of course, you then need to deduct the \$20 I spent on still more rocks at the silent auction and from fellow tailgaters. Isn't the point of a tailgate to get rid of rocks, not to collect more?? With such keen business sense, maybe, just maybe, I'm not quite ready to go commercial just yet...Here's to same place, same time, same good fun next year!



Per usual, tailgaters offered a broad range of self-collected goodies.



SHOW

VGMS Annual Show: Stocking Up for the Kids' Booth 2026

Jim Brace-Thompson, Kids' Booth Elf

On October 12, Nancy and I met up with Susan and Art Lopez at the clubhouse to sort through, organize, and augment Kids' Booth supplies, especially those intended for the Spinning Wheel, and to make note of where we might be coming up short. We can always use more Spinning Wheel prizes in the form of nice minerals, crystals, polished rocks, fossils, basic jewelry, etc. Emphasis on "nice." (It also helps to wash off the dirt.) Donations are welcomed. What's in your rock pile?

If you are in charge of a station at our 2026 Show, now's the time to start pulling things together. It'll be here before we know it!



Time to start stocking up! Do you have items to donate for the Show Kids' Booth?

Upcoming Shows

RMGM Tucson Mineral & Fossil Show
January 30 - February 14, 2026
 1920 N. Oracle Road, Tucson, Arizona
 Tent Show January 30 - February 14, 2026
 Wholesale (3 Dealers): January 23 - February 7, 2026 (metal building)
 Jeanne's Rock Shop (Miracle Breeze Bld) January 23 - February 14, 2026

Hours:
 Everyday: 10 am to 6 pm
 except
 Saturday: February 14, 2026: 10 am - 4 pm

FREE ADMISSION
 FREE PARKING
 FAMILY FUN



Pterosaur from Cretaceous (66 Ma) of Northwest Africa by Paleo Passion LLC (Booth 34)

RETAIL AND WHOLESALE
 Retail sales tax license required for wholesale purchases

Fossils
 Minerals
 Cabochons
 Cutting Rough
 Metals-Gold/Silver
 Meteorites & Tektites
 Carvings & Decorator Items
 Gems, Minerals, Jewelry & More ...

www.RMGMPROMOTIONS.com

VENTURA GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY
 Presents



VENTURA GEM SHOW
GEMS • MINERALS • JEWELRY • FOSSILS

MARCH 7-8 2026
 VISIT: VGMS.ORG

VENTURA FAIRGROUNDS • VENTURA, CA
 SAT. (10AM TO 5PM) • SUN. (10AM TO 4PM)
FREE ADMISSION
 Gems, Minerals, Rocks, Fossils, Jewelry, Exhibits
 Dealers, Demonstrations, Raffles, Silent Auctions
 Country Store, Plant Sales, Kids Activities



FIELD TRIPS

Wolfe's Gems and Jewelry

Diane Cook

Thank you to Wolfe's Gems and Jewelry. Steve invited VGMS members to his warehouse and offered fabulous discounts to club members. Steve was available to answer questions and help identify minerals for members. If you would like to participate in our next visit, please email Diane Cook @ johndianedaisy@yahoo.com to be added to the list.



All smiles at our visit to Wolfe's Gems and Jewelry

Trip Report: Clear Creek Management Area

Tyrone LaFay, 2nd VP – Field Trips

Ever wonder what one of the most minerally diverse areas of our state looks like? Well, you'll have to join us next year for our annual Clear Creek field trip and find out. The Clear Creek Management Area is home to over 150 semi-precious minerals and gemstones. Some of the more popular materials that VGMS members enjoy rockhounding here include: plasma agate and various types of jade including jadeite. California's rare state gem, Benitoite, has been known to be found in the area. It fluoresces, so perhaps we'll organize a nighttime expedition in 2026.



Clear Creek Management Area

With the government shutdown, many BLM permit accessible areas were being closed as federal employees became furloughed. After conducting some research and making a few phone calls, I was unable to receive conclusive answers as to whether we would be able to access both the campground and the gated Clear Creek Management area. But that wasn't going to deter me and I was eager to make our annual pilgrimage to the area regardless.

Being one of our rare overnight field trips, many of us arrived at the Jade Mill Campground on Friday, October 10th. Upon arriving, I immediately went to ensure that we could still access the locked gate into the management area and conduct an assessment of the road conditions. Once it was confirmed that we could all access the campground and the collecting locations, we all settled into our camps for the night.



Jade Mill Campground

On the morning of October 11th, six VGMS rockhounds converged at the field trip meeting location, excited for the adventure ahead. After discussing road conditions and showing some of the material that we would be collecting, we became a three-vehicle rockhound caravan and began the 30-minute drive to the first collection location: Plasma Agate. Plasma Agate

is a kaleidoscope whirlwind of various minerals including but not limited to serpentine, jadeite, chalcedony and cinnabar. The material is quite plentiful, so we all enjoyed the morning exploring the hillsides and filling our buckets.



Plasma Agate location (and a random motorcycle ramp constructed with...you guessed it, plasma agate).



Daven showcasing the proper use of eye protection while attempting to claim a chunk off of the famed Tower-O-Plasma Agate.



Plasma Agate hounded by Daven & Joanne.



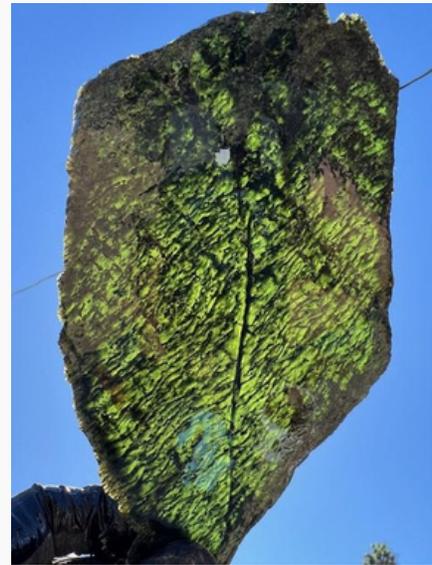
Sheri loading up her plasma agate finds.

Feeling satisfied with our finds, our rockhound caravan set off back towards the campground and our various collecting locations along Clear Creek. With a recent rain event in the watershed, there was a decent amount

of sediment along the creek banks making it somewhat challenging to identify the material not within the running creek bed. We spent the remaining afternoon splashing around and hounding the creek at different sites while slowly making our way back to camp. With the recent rains, there seemed to be an abundance of jade variations within the creek including nephrite, jadeite and possibly Olivine.



Clear Creek, Paicines, CA



Cut slab of the possible Olivine material showing its translucency.

As Sunday morning arrived, our group slowly packed up their respective camps and said our goodbyes before the long drive home. If you are curious about going on a field trip and you haven't been on an overnight trip, this is a great option as the campground is clean, relatively close to collecting sites and has pit toilets. Come join us next year!



Clear Creek Jade variation; possibly Olivine.



Clear Creek rockhounding

Continuing the Search for a New Home Base: Can you help?

Jim Brace-Thompson

Last month, I pointed out that we are under serious pressure to find a new home base for our society. We have about a year and a half before we'll likely need to vacate and make a move into new digs for our workshop studio, museum, library, and storage space.

I'm on an ad hoc committee along with David Springer, Art Lopez, and Diane Cook to systematically explore avenues, agencies, and possibilities. If you would like to join this committee, we welcome your help. Even if not interested in being on the committee itself, if you have ideas, connections, or knowledge of possible target locations (or knowledge about things like how to apply for grants), we'd love to hear from you. This is truly an all-hands-on-deck issue, and the clock is ticking.

On the good-news side of the ledger, the Ventura Breeze biweekly newspaper has agreed to run an article telling the community about us and our hunt for a new home, and our local Ventura chapter of the Rotary Club is passing around news of our search in hopes of growing a network of contacts. If you can help with ideas or contacts, please contact David Springer right away!



Sadly, not too long from now we'll need to bid a fond farewell to our current clubhouse and museum room. Can you help us find a new home base?



WORKSHOP HAPPENINGS

With the sun setting ever earlier and bringing darkness to winding forest roads, we've terminated our Wednesday evening workshops until Earth toggles back to more extended sunshine in the spring. Plus, our regular monthly Saturday workshop date for October 18 was pre-empted by Rocktoberfest, so there's not a whole lot to report this month. But folks did pour into our first-Sunday-of-the-month workshop on November 2. Stewards David Springer, Ron Wise, and Tyrone LaFay oversaw a hardy group of ten, including Shirley Layton, Rich Pisor, Lauren Wideman, Holly Green, Emily Delatorre, Daniel Jordan, Michael Rittenberg, Julie Cox, Robert Seaton, and me.



Rich took a break from the flat lap to enjoy some fine fall weather at the clubhouse.



Shirley and Holly exchanged notes while cabbing at the Genies.

Come on in, folks, and join the fun! The Holiday Season is officially upon us, and there's no better gift than a shiny cabochon! Even if you do have to explain to the recipient what a cabochon is...

Editor's note: Beginning In January, the Workshop Happenings section, formerly dedicated to a written article, will now showcase photos submitted by our readers. Send us your favorite shots— general workshop goings on, projects you're working on, material that you plan to work with - and we will include them.



FEDERATION NEWS

CFMS Fall Business Meeting

Erin Valenzuela, Acting VGMS Federation Director

I attended the annual Fall Business Meeting and election of 2026 Officers on November 7-9, 2025, at the Wyndham-Visalia, as a stand-in for Jim Brace-Thompson. Friday night was the Cracker Barrel with a silent auction to benefit the CFMS scholarship foundation. Then Saturday was a business meeting where we voted the new board members in, passed some motions, and heard reports from committee chairs and board members. Jim is on quite a few committees! And I was even selected to be on the nomination committee next year! We escaped for lunch, some rock shopping, and a Sinclair dinosaur photo. Then it was back to the hotel for the banquet. Our own Diane Cook was sworn in as a 2026 CFMS president. Valerie Churchill helped me sell almost all of the AFMS raffle tickets Jim gave me. Outgoing President Susan



The outgoing 2025 CFMS Board of Directors

Chaisson-Walblom was given a gift that was made by members of our club as a special memory of her term in office. We ended the night with a pink afterparty! I enjoyed being Jim for the weekend and learning more about CFMS!



Past president (and one of our favorite show demonstrators) Tony Fender gave the incoming board members gifts and words of encouragement before installing them for 2026.



Susan's gift- a carved dinosaur on polished coprolite. VGMS members Dick White, John and Diane Cook and Nancy Brace-Thompson helped in the finding, designing, and making of the piece!



VGMS members celebrating Diane at the Pink After Party!

**To VGMS Pebble Pups & Juniors:
Go for the CFMS Junior Achievement Award!**

Jim Brace-Thompson, CFMS Junior Activities Chair

Applications are now being accepted for 2026 CFMS Junior Achievement Awards for Pebble Pups (under age 12) and Juniors (ages 12-18). The child's age as of December 31, 2025, determines the age group. The following areas are considered: hobby, scholastics, community involvement, and work-related. For each,

kids should provide as much detail as possible covering the full preceding year (2025). The application form has been appearing in the CFMS Newsletter and is on our VGMS take-one table at our monthly meetings. It's also posted to the CFMS website (cfmsinc.org). Or you can simply email me, and I'll attach a copy to a reply email.

This award requires a formal application from the junior member that will be scored against other applications. At the CFMS Show & Convention Awards Banquet, winners receive a Certificate-of-Achievement and \$100. If a child won in the past year, that child needs to wait out a year to enter again UNLESS s/he has moved up from Pebble Pups to Juniors. After completing the application, kids need signatures of two representatives from their society, e.g., President, Federation Director, Membership Chair, Juniors Leader, etc. Applications should be accompanied by a short cover letter written by the child or dictated to a parent highlighting any accomplishments to which s/he wishes to draw special attention; basically, "in your own words, tell us where you really shine." Kids will then mail or email their applications to the CFMS Junior Activities Chair, i.e., me. Questions? I'm happy to field them (jbraceth@roadrunner.com). The deadline is March 1, 2026.

Notice of winners, with brief descriptions of accomplishments, will be posted in the CFMS Newsletter, and they will be honored at the 2026 CFMS Show & Convention Awards Banquet. If winners are unable to attend, certificates and checks will be mailed or passed along to a club member in attendance.



Last year, Valerie and Skyla were the winner and runner-up for the Pebble Pup CFMS Junior Achievement Award, while Lucia won in the Juniors group.

Several VGMS pebble pups and juniors have won or been runner-ups since I began this program six years ago. Do you have rock-crazy kids in your household? Encourage them to go for it!

MEETING MINUTES**VGMS General Meeting, October 24, 2025, at the Poinsettia Pavilion**

Called to order at 7:27 PM PST, John Cook (David Springer absent), Presiding

7:00 PM – 7:30 PM was social time.

Attendees: Tonight's meeting was attended by 38 members and 2 guests.

Carrie Ellers motioned to accept the minutes from the September 24, 2025, General Meeting as printed in the bulletin. Jared McGowan second. Motion passed.

Announcements

- Thank you to Erin and Jim for helping John at the SMNHM on Oct. 13.
- Clubhouse open, the first Sunday 11/2 (12-3 pm) and the third Saturday 11/15,
- Gold Coast show will be November 15 & 16. We will have a kid's booth and be selling t-shirts. We need volunteers, see Diane.
- Purchase your equipment usage card from Celia.

Old Business

- We need to keep looking for a new location for a clubhouse. If you have any leads, please let David, Jim or Art know.
- Rockhound of The Year nominations are due November 1.
- We are still discussing if we want to do a raffle for a chance to go to Camp Paradise.

New Business

- Upcoming rock sale in Lompoc will be Dec 6, sign up on whoscoming.
- Jim is meeting with the sons of Inez Shakeman this weekend to discuss her the value of her collection.
- The nominating committee would like to thank the VGMS board for their service to VGMS in 2025. Here is the slate of candidates for 2026:
 - President: John Cook
 - First VP of Programs: David Springer
 - Second VP of Field Trips: Tyrone LaFay
 - Third VP Show Chair: Diane Cook
 - Secretary: Sheri Hultman
 - Treasurer: Celia Churchill
 - Bulletin Editor: Monika Blackburn
 - Membership Secretary: Erin Valenzuela
 - Federation Director: Jim Brace-Thompson
 - Web Director: Troy Schmidt
 - Parliamentarian: Nancy Brace-Thompson

Officer Reports

- 1st VP - Programs - John Cook
 - At the October meeting we hear from Duke Mulholland about fossil finds in Simi Valley.
 - November meeting is a silent auction.
 - December meeting is the Christmas Party.
- 2nd VP - Field Trips - Tyrone LaFay
 - The weekend of October 11, Tyrone led a field trip to Clear Creek to collect Plasma Agate. Despite the shutdown 6 people went hunting and found some amazing material.

- 3rd VP, Show Chair, Diane Cook
 - Show will be March 7 & 8.
 - We are having show meetings, if you want to help, let Diane know.
- Membership Secretary - Erin Valenzuela
 - 206 Adult members, 38 Pebble Pups and 13 Juniors for a total of 257.
 - Membership is due now! Thank you, Richard and Susan, for being the first.
- Treasurer - Celia Churchill
 - Turn in your receipts for 2025.
 - Buy your usage cards.
- Secretary - Sheri Hultman
 - Nothing to report.
- Bulletin Editor - Monika Blackburn (absent)
 - Due date for next bulletin is Nov. 10, send submissions to vgmseditor@gmail.com
- Federation Director - Jim Brace-Thompson
 - Federation meeting November 7-9. Diane Cook will be the new President. Erin Valenzuela will be attending for Jim.
 - CFMS Jr. Achievement Award application on the back table. They are due March 1.
 - Thank you to Mike Havstad for making new signage for the Gold Bear and Benoit case.
 - Jim is seeking donations for the endowment raffle, this helps fund the pup program. Phyllis White, David Springer and Jim Brace-Thompson have already donated. Ideally, \$75 and up value and easy to mail. Jim is also selling raffle tickets.
- Web Director - Troy Schmidt
 - Website is up to date.
- Parliamentarian/Scholarship - Nancy Brace-Thompson (absent, email report)
 - By-Laws: Thank you to everyone who voted at the last member meeting or via email. We received enough votes to pass the VGMS By-Law changes. That means the 2026 dues will be \$25.00 for the first household member and \$15.00 for each additional member. Anyone joining in November or December will pay the new dues amount plus a \$5.00 service fee. The membership will be good through 2026.
 - Scholarship: There is an article regarding our 2026 scholarship in the current bulletin. I will be sending emails to local earth science professors at different colleges in the near future. If you know of a high school senior or college student who will be or is studying an earth science or related field, please have them contact me and I can send them the scholarship information.

Committee Reports

- Pebble Pups - Erin Valenzuela (absent) - David Springer reported
 - Our last meeting was Special Effects. Thank you, Jim for helping.
 - Our next meeting will be this Saturday at the clubhouse. We will celebrate National Fossil Day.
 - Erin would like to Pups to submit articles to the bulletin.
 - 10/24 is National Fossil Day
- Juniors - Lisa Batchelder-Hetrick (absent, Erin Valenzuela)
 - Monika would like to have a Junior section or even a Junior takeover of the bulletin edition.
- Ways and Means- Jenifer Russell
 - Thank you, Brett for the donation! Always accepting donations.
- Museum - Troy Schmidt
 - Nothing to report.

Committee Reports (cont'd.)

- Educational Outreach - Jim Brace-Thompson
 - Minerals Day Oct. 13 at the Santa Barbara Natural History Museum, we had a table at the event with minerals and information about our club.
 - Jim helped Celia's Girl Scout troop make silver keys for their Bridging ceremony.
- Hostess - Susan Slyker
 - Thank you to Erin Valenzuela for snacks this month.
 - November will be our annual Pumpkin potluck.
 - December is the Christmas party.
- Librarian - Heather (absent) & Robert Seaton
 - Nothing to report.
- Facility Maintenance - Robert Seaton
 - Nothing to report.
- Stewards - Ron Wise, John Cook, Tyrone LaFay and David Springer (absent)
 - 16" saw fixed.

Next members meeting is Wednesday, November 12 (note 2nd Wednesday) at 7:30 at the Poinsettia Pavilion.

Respectfully submitted on October 30, 2025, by Sheri Hultman, Recording Secretary.

VGMS Board Meeting, November 6, 2025, via Zoom

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

Attendees: David Springer, John & Diane Cook, Sheri Hultman, Robert Seaton, Celia Churchill, Terry Wilson, Lisa Batchelder, Erin Valenzuela, Tyrone LaFay and Troy Schmidt

Erin Valenzuela motioned to approve the October 2, 2025 Board Meeting minutes as they are printed in the bulletin. Troy Schmidt seconded. Motion passed.

Old Business

- Camp Paradise raffle discussion tabled until Jim is back.
- Rockhound of the year nominations: Pebble Pups/Junior Valerie Churchill and Kaylee Tan; Adult(s) Erin Valenzuela, Micheal & Lisa Rittenberg, Diane & John Cook, Dick & Phyllis White and Emily De La Torre. The winners will be announced at the Christmas Party!

New Business

- Jim met with a family of a past member to help evaluate the collection. Stay tuned.
- Clubhouse open, the first Sunday 12/7 (12-3 pm) and the third Saturday 11/15 (9-12 pm).

Officer Reports

- 1st VP - Programs - John Cook
 - November meeting will be a Silent Auction. John will have Monika send out the rules.
 - December meeting will be the Christmas Party. The whosbringingwhat is up. Terry will do the turkey, Celia will do the ham and Erin will make sure we have plates, napkins, etc.
- 2nd VP - Field Trips - Tyrone LaFay
 - The weekend of October 11, Tyrone led a field trip to Clear Creek management area. 6 members attended.
 - Dec. 6 there is a field trip to the Tyler Frank Museum. It's on whoscoming.

Officer Reports (cont.'d)

- 3rd VP - Show- Diane Cook
 - March Show meeting 11/19 at 7pm on Zoom. Date change Diane will send out new date.
 - At the Gold Coast show we will have a kid's booth, sell T-shirts and have information about our club.
- Treasurer -Celia Churchill
 - Celia has updated all forms with the state.
- Secretary - Sheri Hultman
 - Nothing to report.
- Web Director - Troy Schmidt
 - Troy will add clubhouse dates.
- Membership Secretary - Erin Valenzuela
 - Erin Valenzuela motioned to accept new members; William Wood, Beth Cox, Zachary Kitt and Trevor Ashton. Sheri Hultman seconded. The motion passed.
 - After the above were voted in, we have 212 Adult members, 38 Pebble Pups and 13 Juniormembers. Total 263 members.
- Federation Director - Jim Brace-Thompson (absent)
 - Director's meeting will be 11/7-11/9, in Visalia. They are electing a whole new board.
- Bulletin Editor - Monika Blackburn (absent)
 - Deadline for newsletter is the 15th of the month, it will be a double issue. vgmseditor@gmail.com.
- Parliamentarian/Scholarship - Nancy Brace-Thompson (absent)
 - Nothing to report.

Committee Reports

- Workshop New Home: David Springer, Art Lopez, and Jim Brace-Thompson
 - Meeting next Tuesday, working on action plan.
 - Jim wrote an article that will be coming out in the Ventura Breeze in the future about who we are and what we are looking for in a clubhouse.
- Pebble Pups - Erin Valenzuela
 - October meeting cancelled.
 - The November meeting will be the Gold Coast show. We will be doing a little bit on several badges, having a scavenger hunt and write an article for the bulletin.
 - We will be having our Christmas Party on December 13.
- Juniors - Lisa Batchelder-Hetrick (absent) and Erin Valenzuela
 - Nothing to Report.
- Museum - Troy Schmidt
 - Nothing to Report.
- Educational Outreach - Jim Brace-Thompson (absent)
 - Nothing to Report.
- Historian/Archivist - Jim Brace-Thompson (absent)
 - Nothing to Report.
- Librarians - Heather (absent) & Robert Seaton
 - Robert ordered Dragon Minerals book, still waiting.

Committee Reports (cont'd)

- Clubhouse Maintenance: Robert Seaton
 - Cleaned saw room roof.
 - Robert will replace beam for the saw room by the end of the year.
 - Mice population is out of control. New traps above dopping station. Please be aware and clean up after yourselves.
- Stewards - John, Ron, Tyrone, and David
 - Tyrone fixed the 14" saw. 20" and 24" saw running well. We could possibly put in another saw if needed.
 - 3 people certified.

John Cook motioned to adjourn the meeting. Troy Schmidt seconded. Motion passes at 7:46pm.

Next Board Meeting: December 4, 2025, at 7 pm

Next Membership Meeting: November 12, 2025, at 7:30 pm

Respectfully submitted on November 12. By Sheri Hultman, Recording Secretary

VGMS General Meeting, November 14, 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 23 members.

Troy Schmidt motioned to accept the minutes from the October 25, 2025, General Meeting as printed in the bulletin. Robert Seaton second. Motion passed.

Announcements

- Clubhouse open, this Saturday 11/15 (9 am to 12 pm), the first Sunday 12/7 (12-3 pm) and the third Saturday 12/20 (9 am-12 pm).
- Gold Coast show will be November 15 & 16. We will have a kid's booth and will be selling t-shirts. We need volunteers, both days and Friday to help set up.
- Purchase your equipment usage card from Celia.
- Thank you for your nomination for Rockhound of the Year, winners will be announced at Christmas Party.
- Thank you, John Cook, for covering for David last month.

Old Business

- We need to keep looking for a new location for a clubhouse. If you have any leads please let David, Jim or Art know. We need something similar in size to Camp Comfort. We are looking for a grant writer, since we will probably have to pay more rent. Jim put an article in the Ventura Breeze about who we are and what we need.

Old Business (cont.'d)

- We voted in the slate of candidates for 2026. There were no new nominations from the floor. The vote was a voice vote and the slate passed.
 - President: John Cook
 - First VP of Programs: David Springer
 - Second VP of Field Trips: Tyrone LaFay
 - Third VP Show Chair: Diane Cook
 - Secretary: Sheri Hultman
 - Treasurer: Celia Churchill
 - Bulletin Editor: Monika Blackburn
 - Membership Secretary: Erin Valenzuela
 - Federation Director: Jim Brace-Thompson
 - Web Director: Troy Schmidt
 - Parliamentarian: Nancy Brace-Thompson

New Business

- Upcoming rock sale in Lompoc will be Dec 6, sign up on whoscoming.

Officer Reports

- 1st VP - Programs - John Cook
 - The November meeting was a silent auction.
 - December meeting is the Christmas Party. Please go to whobringingwhat/vgms.com to sign up. There will be a gift exchange, details will be in the bulletin.
- 2nd VP - Field Trips - Tyrone LaFay (absent)
 - No December field trip.
- 3rd VP, Show Chair, Diane Cook (absent)
 - Pick up parking pass for Gold Coast show tonight if you are volunteering.
- Membership Secretary - Erin Valenzuela
 - 211 Adult members, 38 Pebble Pups and 13 Juniors for a total of 263.
 - Membership is due now. Please pay by Jan. 31, 2026.
- Treasurer - Celia Churchill
 - Buy your usage cards.
- Secretary - Sheri Hultman
 - Nothing to report.
- Bulletin Editor - Monika Blackburn (absent)
 - Due date for next bulletin is Nov. 15, send submissions to vgmseditor@gmail.com
- Federation Director - Jim Brace-Thompson
 - Federation meeting was November 7-9. Diane Cook is the new President. Erin Valenzuela attended for Jim.
 - CFMS show will be 9/19-9/20 in Reno.
 - CFMS has decided to go all electronic to save money on printing and mailing.
 - The Scholarship money will now go directly to the colleges and they will handle it.
 - Jim selling raffle tickets.
- Web Director - Troy Schmidt
 - Website is up to date.
- Parliamentarian/Scholarship - Nancy Brace-Thompson (absent, email report):
 - Nancy sent out emails to universities and colleges about our scholarships. She had one of our junior members interested.

Committee Reports

- Pebble Pups - Erin Valenzuela (absent) - David Springer reported
 - We are having our next meeting this Saturday at the Gold Coast Gem Show.
 - The Christmas party will be 12/13 at the clubhouse.
- Juniors - Lisa Batchelder-Hetrick (absent, Erin Valenzuela):
 - Nothing to report.
- Ways and Means- Jenifer Russell:
 - Always accepting donations.
- Museum - Troy Schmidt:
 - Troy is hoping to get up there this weekend, he has some new labels and newsletters he would like to put on our website.
- Educational Outreach - Jim Brace-Thompson
 - Minerals Day Oct. 13 at the Santa Barbara Natural History Museum, we had a table at the event with minerals and information about our club.
 - Jim helped Celia's Girl Scout troop make silver keys for their Bridging ceremony.
- Hostess - Susan Slyker (absent)
 - December is the Christmas party.
- Librarian - Heather (absent) & Robert Seaton (absent):
 - Nothing to report.
- Facility Maintenance - Robert Seaton (absent)
 - Nothing to report.
- Stewards - Ron Wise, John Cook, Tyrone LaFay and David Springer:
 - All saws are working well.
 - The experiment with the refurbished wheels did not go well. We will not buy those again.

Sheri Hultman motioned to adjourn meeting at 8:50. Robert Seaton seconded. Motion passed.

Next members meeting is Wednesday, December 10, (note 2nd Wednesday) at 7:30 at the Poinsettia Pavilion. Respectfully submitted on November 14, 2025, by Sheri Hultman, Recording Secretary.



ROCKHOUND RAMBLINGS

Sand Spikes

Troy Schmidt

It's Thanksgiving week, so maybe I've got drumsticks on the brain. After opening a specimen drawer today, I could've sworn I saw a turkey leg — well, maybe more of a chicken leg. Turns out it wasn't poultry at all. It was just a drumstick-shaped rock called a "sand spike".

So, what exactly is a sand spike and how did they form? Good question — and one that geologists have been puzzling over for nearly two centuries.

Sand spikes have generally been considered to be pin-shaped concretions made of carbonate-cemented sandstone. They're rare little oddities found only in a few places worldwide: Southern Germany and closer to home near Mount Signal in Imperial County, California.

For years their origin was a mystery despite many theories. But in 2021 a team of researchers (Buchner, Sach, & Schmieder) published a paper in *Nature Communications* with a bold new theory. They suggest sand spikes formed in a geological instant, triggered by seismic shockwaves — think asteroid impacts or powerful earthquakes. In fact, they argue sand spikes belong to a relatively new rock type dubbed a "seismite."

The German specimens are linked to the Nördlinger Ries crater where an asteroid slammed into Earth about 14.8 million years ago. The California spikes? They sit right by the San Andreas Fault. Even cooler, the spikes don't just hang out near these seismic hot spots — they actually point back toward the source like little geological compasses in the desert sands.



Sand spike or turkey leg??

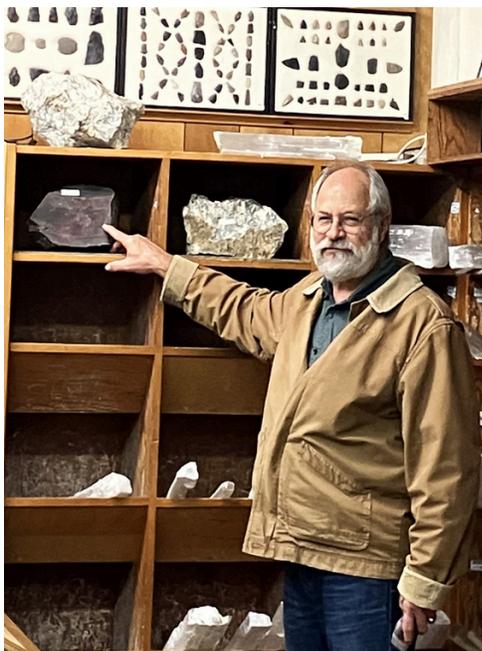
Unlike most concretions which slowly accumulate material over time, sand spikes form when sudden powerful shockwaves squeeze water out of sandy pockets. The dissolved ions solidify rapidly, binding sand grains together into these peculiar shapes. It's geology in fast-forward.

Imperial County's sand spikes were first discovered in the 1930s. Thousands turned up in the following decades, but by the 1950s most had been collected — or inadvertently crushed by bulldozers. Today the site is considered exhausted, which makes this specimen a rare treasure in any collection of California rocks & minerals.

The Demise of the Mom-and-Pop Rock Shop

Jim Brace-Thompson

It was bound to happen one day, and I guess today is the day. The last time we visited our son in Portland, Oregon, Nancy and I marveled at airplane views of some ten mighty stratovolcanoes of the Cascade Range all in a row along the flight path from Santa Barbara. Once on the ground, we enjoyed a visit to Ed’s House of Gems—a genuine throwback to the Glory Days of Rockhounding when mom-and-pop rock shops dotted the land, including one in our hometown of Ventura. Those shops featured the usual trays of common tumble-polished pebbles and racks of jewelry but also lapidary supplies and equipment plus a primary focus on big bins brimming with large rough gemstone material collected locally and regionally. In the case of Ed’s House of Gems, the rough included Oregon carnelian beach agates, Ochoco jasp-agate, fossil crabs in concretions, Richardson Ranch thunder eggs (cut and uncut), Polka Dot agate, Maury Mountain moss agate in vivid greens, reds, and yellows, sparkling Oregon opal, and on and on. To top it off, all were offered at bargain-basement prices, and each chunk seemed to be accompanied by a personal tale of adventure related by Ed himself.



Ed’s House of Gems in days of old: big rough chunks filled big bins, and each chunk came with a story from Ed himself.

On a return visit the second weekend of November this year, alas, we found the following posting when googling for store hours: “Ed’s House of Gems is permanently closed and, after over 60 years, its physical location is no longer an active business. Remaining inventory is being sold as one lot for \$100,000.”

If you thumb through old issues of rock and gem hobby magazines, you’ll see ads for several mom-and-pop rock shops scattered throughout Portland. No longer. What now passes for “Portland rock shop” in a Google search are a half dozen jewelry and healing stone outlets, all offering identical little overpriced tumble-polished rose quartz and amethyst pebbles with weird metaphysical names and kitschy carved knickknacks and geegaws that seem to have come from the same wholesaler in Hong Kong.

Regrettably, Nancy and I have seen the same phenomenon whenever we return East and take the drive between Boston and Bar Harbor. With each passing year, we see one more mom-and-pop shop abandoned and shuttered. You want a local rock now? I mean a “real” rock? Ya gotta go on eBay and pay through the nose, with no personal story provided by Ed. It was bound to happen one day. Sadly, today is that day. Oh, and those majestic peaks of Cascadia stratovolcanoes? The clouds were so thick, so high, and so heavy in mourning, we didn’t see a one this time around.



What passes for “rock shop” today: tiny trays of overpriced “healing” stones with no provenance—and no story by Ed.

Mary Anning Lives on in Lyme Regis and London

Skyla Lynn Zuniga

Two years ago, I found a book about a fossil hunter named Mary Anning and ever since I have been hooked on her. I read more books about her and I fell more and more in love with her. I loved her so much that I created a case about her and the fossils she found for a CFMS show and my local county fair. Mary Anning loved fossil hunting adventures. My grandparents surprised me and took me to her hometown of Lyme Regis, England, at the end of August where I had my very own adventure.

In her town I realized just how much the people there love her and appreciate her. A lot of stores and buildings are named after her. There are many fossil stores there. I visited Lyme Regis Fossil Shop, Anning's Fossils, and other small ones. My favorite thing I saw was the Lyme Regis Museum Where Mary Anning Lived! It is on the same spot where her house and first fossil shop, "Anning's Fossil Depot" used to be. The museum tells you about the city of Lyme Regis and all about Mary Anning. It is right next to the beach where she would walk to go fossil hunting.

As you enter the museum, there is a group of fake ammonites in the concrete. Ammonites are seen all over Lyme Regis, some are real and others are pictures. On the first level of the Museum was the entrance and gift shop and displays of Lyme Regis through the years. In one of the rooms, I saw some of the fossils she found when she was alive including crinoid stars. There were also real fossils of animals and shells that you would find in Lyme Regis.



As you were climbing up to the second level you could see different pictures of Mary Anning and the buildings of the town around the walls. There was a balcony where you looked out into the room below and could see a Pterosaur fossil hanging from the ceiling of the first floor. A large ammonite was inside the wall of the staircase which was very curvy. The coolest thing on the Mary Anning level was that someone built a Lego Ichthyosaurus. It was in a glass case next to a real fossilized Ichthyosaurus! There was a statue of Tray, Mary Anning's dog and Plesiosaur fossils, too.

The third floor had Mary Anning's notes that she took while cleaning and preparing her fossils. It was so cool to see her handwriting and sketches she drew. There were also letters that had been written to her on display. There were fossils everywhere in the museum, even on the stairs going back to the main floor.

One of the best things I saw in Lyme Regis was a statue of Mary Anning that was created and placed right by the beach that she had to have walked by to go fossil hunting. The statue is made of metal and shows her carrying a basket for her fossils, a chisel to dig up fossils and she's holding an ammonite in her hand. The bottom of her dress had ammonites sculpted around it. Right behind her was her guard dog Tray.

I was surprised to learn that her grave was so close to her old home. It is inside the church's yard down the block from her home, the museum. She is buried there with her brother Joseph. I left a Ventura County beach Jasper and a picture of me and my showcase while I was dressed up as her. Other people had left flowers and mini ammonites on the gravestone. Inside the church there is a display about Mary Anning and a Memorial Window about her that is inside.

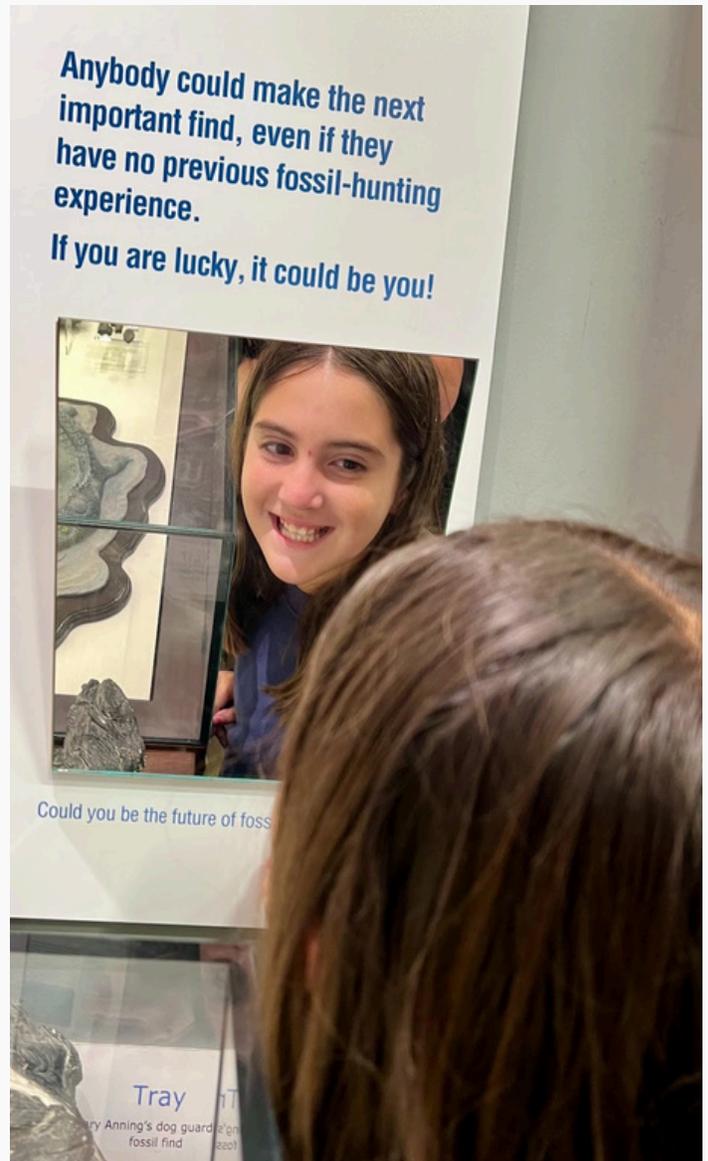


The first day it rained and was very windy so I couldn't go out to the cliffs where Mary Anning found her fossils or dig at the beach like I wanted to. The waves at the beach there get really high and there were signs posted that it was dangerous and for people to stay away. The second day it rained off and on and I was able to go to the beach to look for stones and fossils. I kept many of them until our flight from Italy to Paris. The airport security threw my beach finds away except for a few that I had placed inside my suitcase. Next time I go, I am going to hide more inside my suitcase!

After I visited Lyme Regis, I visited London. I went to see Big Ben, the London Eye, and the Museum of Natural History. If you ever go to London, you must visit here to see the large walls full of Mary Anning's fossils. My family and I saw the very first Plesiosaurus and Ichthyosaurus that Mary found. I thought they were going to be the size of my wall and was not expecting them to be as long or longer than the whole side of my house. I started to count all the fossils in the Mary Anning Collection Hall but then was distracted by other cool things I discovered on the wall. There was an Ichthyosaurus fossil that had several ammonites stuck on the bones of the fossils. I couldn't believe the ammonites had become fossilized with the bones. I was also so surprised to see an Ichthyosaurus fossil on the wall that had babies in the stomach. You could see them attached to the fossil!



Mary Anning and her discoveries are still around for all of us to see and learn about. I am so grateful and blessed to have been able to go on this amazing trip with my grandparents. Lyme Regis and London were so fascinating. I hope I get to go back to visit there again. I will never forget my experience with the best fossil hunter ever, Mary Anning.



EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

Mineral Day in Santa Barbara

Jim Brace-Thompson, Educational Outreach Chair

Each year, a variety of groups like the American Geosciences Institute sponsor and celebrate Earth Science Week. Schools, museums, the National Park Service, and others devote an entire week to celebrating Mother Earth and her bounty. On Monday, October 13, Erin Valenzuela drove John Cook and me to the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, where

they were kicking off the week with a different theme for each day. Monday was designated "Minerals Day," and we were given a VGMS booth with two tables. Erin had an informational table with the Mohs scale and with microscopes set up so folks could take a good close look at rocks of varied sorts. The table also included specimens of the official California State Rock

(serpentine), State Mineral (gold), and State Gemstone (benitoite). John and I set up a second table highlighting different California minerals and gemstones alongside things crafted from them—a Clear Creek jadeite fish carving, spheres of Crestmore blue calcite and Ventura beach jasper, cabochon necklaces, a pendant of faceted pink Pala tourmaline, etc.



In Santa Barbara, John and I showed off California minerals and things crafted from them.

We were in a pleasant space under pop-up canopies in an interior courtyard. Attendance was low, but interest was high among families and individuals stopping by. If you've never been to this museum, it's well worth a trip. I dipped into their Minerals Hall, intending to do just a quick walk-around. I emerged 30 minutes later with my cell phone camera burning hot after taking some 50 photos. Really nice specimens are on display! Check 'em out!



Families enjoyed up-close looks at rocks and minerals at Erin's table on Minerals Day.

Girl Scouts Learn Silver Work

Jim Brace-Thompson, Educational Outreach Chair

When Girl Scouts hit sixth grade, they progress from Junior to Cadette, and they hold a Bridging Ceremony to mark the occasion. It's symbolic for opening doors to growth, new challenges, and higher responsibilities. Our own Celia Churchill oversees a group of scouts, and to more concretely open those doors, she decided her girls crossing the bridge should get a charm bracelet key. And not just some key delivered by Amazon Prime. No, her girls would craft their own!



In late October, six Girl Scouts learned the basics of silverwork using precious metal clay.

And so on the evenings of October 20 and 23, I helped six girls make their very own pure silver keys out of precious metal clay for a ceremony that took place November 3. They pressed silver clay into molds I had prepared, carefully trimmed off excess with X-Acto blades, then fired their keys with butane torches before burnishing and polishing. All went well! A project to consider for our VGMS Juniors?



At their Bridging Ceremony, Celia's Juniors became Cadettes and donned the silver keys they crafted themselves.

PEBBLE PUPS

Erin Valenzuela, Pebble Pups

Our November Pebble Pups meeting was held at the Gold Coast Gem Show. We had 6 pups including a brand-new pup and a long-time pup that most of us hadn't met before. And one potential pup guest/friend! We did the regular old business- handed out badges and talked about upcoming meetings. Then we spent a few minutes working on some drawings and write-ups for our bulletin. Our bulletin editor Monika had reached out that she had noticed a lack of Pup/Junior articles throughout the year and wanted us to encourage the kids to get some in this last edition. Having the pups do them together with their friends and parents to help I hope will encourage them to submit articles in 2026 and beyond! We discussed some ideas for next year and the pups had some great ideas- more field trips, rock or fossil hunting, jewelry, more badges and perhaps some beginning lapidary.

Then we held a scavenger hunt throughout the show. The pups had items to find like the state mineral, their birthstones, and certain vendors. They spoke to demonstrators and vendors to learn about their hobbies and businesses. They turned in the scavenger hunt sheets for a prize (a stone animal) and a snack. I think a

fun time was had by all and thank you so much to Steve Wolfe, Luis de Los Santos, and Diane Cook for gifting our pups with some neat items!

Our December meeting/Holiday party will be held on Dec. 13th at 10am at the clubhouse. Check the Band App for details!



Pups and Parents checking out our club demonstrators - plus a fun scavenger hunt and checking off items for 2 badges!

Pup Page

Jokes written by Connor M.

What did the globe say when the Brachiosaurus got eaten by a T. rex?

What in the WORLD??

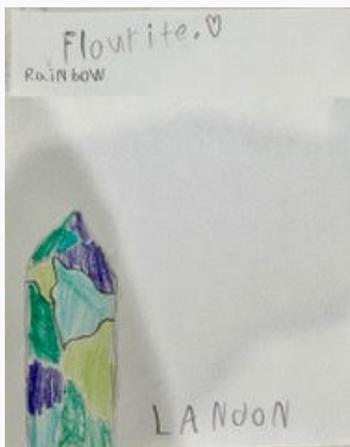
What did the Triceratops say when the Ankylosaurus knocked over a tree?

That tree is totally T-REXED!

What happened to the skunk when the Velociraptor ate him?

He became ex-STINKED!

Our Favorite Minerals by Landon and Lexi S.



My Favorite Rock by Zoe O.

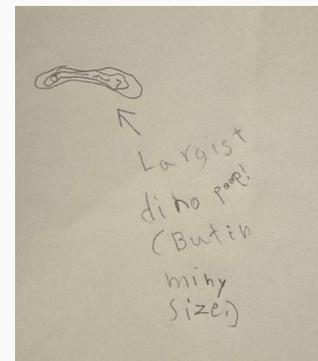
Dragon blood stone is fascinating because it has two of my favorite colors - red and green. Also, why I like it is because it has a cool name.



Zoe's favorite rock

The Poozeum in Arizona by Bowie M.

Last summer I went to the Poozeum, a small museum about Poop. I saw the biggest fossilized Dino poop! It was about 20 pounds. The Poozeum is in Williams Arizona near the Grand Canyon!



Natural History Museum Trip by Skyla Z.

This September I went to the Natural History Museum in London. In the front of the museum there was a dinosaur named Fern. Fern is a Diplodocus. When you go up the stairs in the main hall you can see a fossil whale hanging from the ceiling. I saw an ichthyosaur fossil that was pregnant with six babies. One of my favorite pieces was a really big piece of banded iron.



The Monthly Challenge: This Monthly Challenge Bites!

Jim Brace-Thompson

The prize for our October Monthly Challenge? Fossil shark teeth from the Miocene Epoch I personally collected from sediments of an ancient inland sea that left behind its shadow at Shark Tooth Hill and the Ernst Quarry. Those Pebble Pups and Juniors who successfully took up the Challenge and faced down the sharks were Oliver, Shea, Quinn, Wren, Dashel, Skyla, Julia, Silas, Benji, Bowie, Ryan, Landon, Lexi, and Connor! Quinn notes that shark teeth are one of his favorite fossils. In fact, he hopes to make it out to Shark Tooth Hill sometime soon to find and collect some of his own.

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 15 to 20 quality specimens small and sturdy enough to be sent via the mail, along with info identifying what they are and where they came from. Thank you to Barbra Meisenheimer for donating specimens for our ongoing November Challenge.



Last month, kids successfully taking up the Monthly Challenge enlarged their collections with 15-million-year-old fossil shark teeth from Bakersfield.

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 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 our Silent Auction crew who came to the clubhouse ahead of time to select and organize rocks for Rocktoberfest bidding.

Thank you to Barbra Meisenheimer for a fantastic donation. When her car pulled up from Washington state, it was hard to believe there were nearly two dozen boxes tucked inside, but tucked they were! And we suddenly have an abundance of material for grab bags, silent auctions, spinning wheel prizes, and more! Thank you, Barbra, for a truly impressive donation!

MEMBERSHIP

Membership Secretary Erin here - just a reminder that 2026 membership dues are technically due January 1st but I am accepting renewals now! We take checks, cash, and Zeffy- the link is on the website. Don't forget the dues were raised this year to \$25 for a single (or first) member, \$15 for additional adults and Pups/Juniors in your family. The deadline to renew without penalty is January 31st so get them in early! Please when you renew let us know if you have any changes to your contact info- email, phone, address etc. so we can get the updated Directory out before March 1st. Please include your birthday (month and day) if you'd like your birthday to be included in the calendar. We had a record number of members this year so let's keep it going! Thanks for a great membership year and looking forward to an even better 2026!

CLUB CALENDARS

12 DECEMBER 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 Happy Birthday, Tracy Popiel and Robert Seaton!	2	3	4 Board meeting, 7p	5 Happy Birthday, Mark Paul!	6 Happy Birthday, Karen King- Cantway!
7 Member Workshop 12-3p	8	9	 Holiday Party 6:30p	10 Happy Birthday, Janet Allaway!	11	12
14	15 Happy Birthday, Jared McGowan!	16	17	18 Happy Birthday, Val Darts	19	20 Open Workshop 20 9a-12p Happy Birthday, Matt Wyatt and Colin P.!
21 Happy Birthday, Jenifer Russell!	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			