

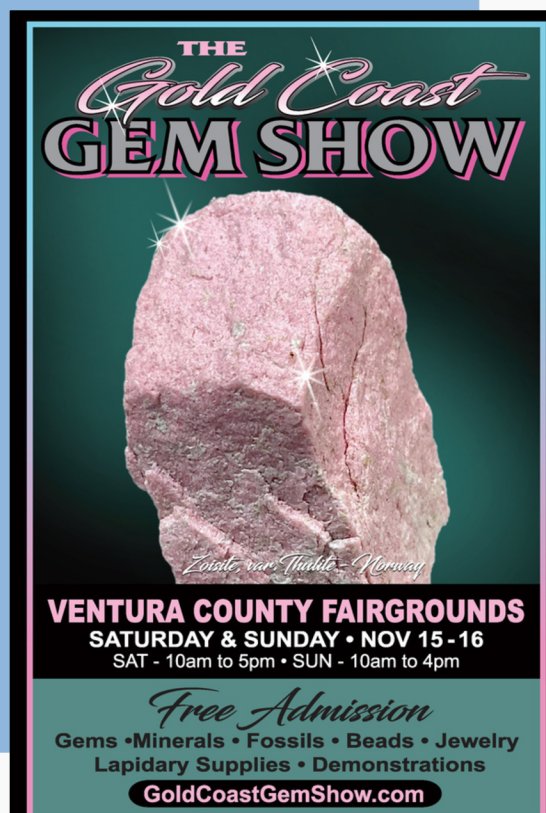
The Ventura Gem & Mineral Society presents:
Rockhound Rambling
The Official Bulletin of the VGMS

Monika Blackburn, Editor
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Gold Coast Show Is Back!

IN THIS ISSUE

- President's Message
- Programs
- Scholarship
- Show
- Search for a New Clubhouse
- Workshop
- Federation News
- Meeting Minutes
- "Rockhound Ramblings" (Editorials)
- VGMS History
- Outreach
- Just for Fun
- Committee Updates (Pebble Pups)
- Club Business
- Calendar



The Gold Coast Gem Show is coming back to the Ventura County Fairgrounds on November 15-16! Showgoers will find unique and quality specimens, beads, jewelry, and lapidary supplies, including demonstrations and activities for the whole family. The show is FREE and open to the public (Fairgrounds parking is additional). The show hours are Saturday, 10-5 pm, and Sunday, 10-4 pm. Find information about volunteering on page 6 of this issue - and remember, volunteering can help Pups and Juniors work towards the Communication and Reaching Across Generations badges, as well as being a lot of fun. Hope to see you 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 Diane 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
Parliamentarian	Nancy Brace-Thompson

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**

October is here! Halloween decorations are popping up, the days are getting shorter, and that familiar autumn chill is in the air. It's my favorite time of year—when the leaves start to change color, evenings begin to feel brisk, and we might even get a taste of real rain. We've wrapped up our final "Summer Nights" open workshop for the season. A quick reminder: our club meetings in November and December will be held on the **SECOND WEDNESDAY** of each month instead of the fourth Wednesday. This allows us to better plan for and enjoy Thanksgiving and the Christmas holidays.

Our scheduled workshop activity continues its frenetic pace. Our saws and Genies are running like an assembly line! Please remember to purchase your equipment usage cards from Celia at our membership meetings and sign up at whoscoming.com/vgms. Also, voting for the VGMS "Rockhound of the Year" is still open; we have separate awards for adults and Pebble Pups/Juniors. Your votes are due to me by October 31 - it only takes a few minutes and your input is valued and appreciated. We have our annual Rocktoberfest to look forward to on October 18th with a group breakfast (lots of extra bacon for all), a silent auction (both adults and kids), and tailgating amongst members. We hope to see you all there at our clubhouse for this annual event.

In November, our program is a silent auction at Poinsettia Pavilion. We've been accumulating some nice donated items, so look for some of those at Rocktoberfest and at the November meeting silent auctions!



Peridot, hessonite garnet, black tourmaline...do you have a favorite "Halloween" gemstone?

In December we will have our holiday party at Poinsettia Pavilion - more details will be forthcoming on these events.

I am interested in hearing from you, and your ideas about how to make our club even better. You can reach me by email: 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 about the bulletin, please email me at vgmseditor@gmail.com. And don't forget to send submissions for a new feature, "Rockhounds and their Hounds."

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!

PROGRAM REVIEW & UPDATE

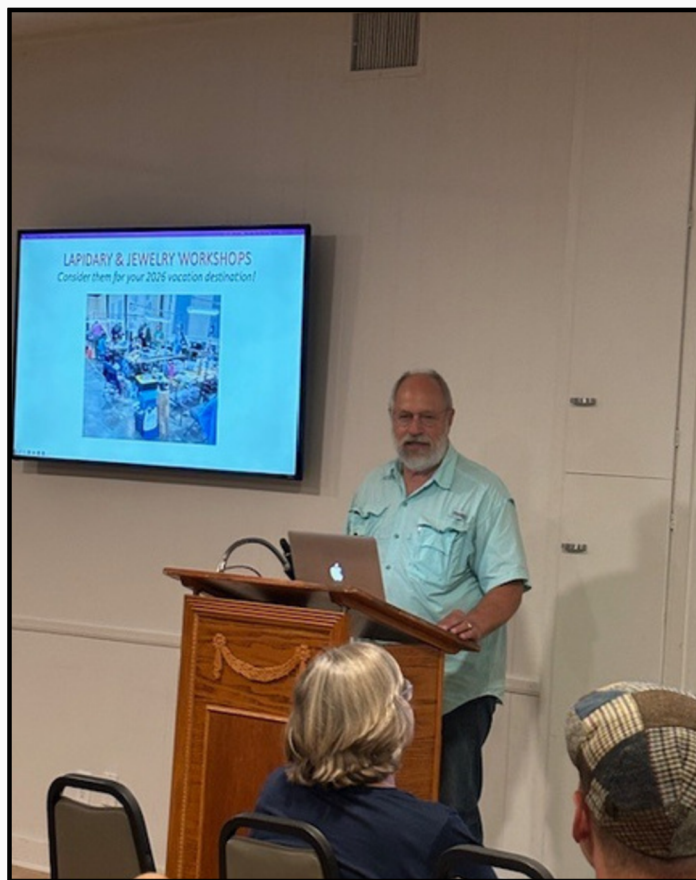
John Cook, 1st VP – Programs

Our September 24, 2025, meeting program was a presentation by our very own Jim and Nancy Brace-Thompson talking about the Camp Paradise Lapidary and Jewelry Workshop they attended this year. Every August, the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies (CFMS) offers two week-long sessions featuring hands-on instruction in the lapidary arts. At Camp Paradise you can sign up for a week and take many classes in many subjects, including cabochons, silver-smithing, wire-wrapping, and much more. The single fee includes room and board including all meals for the week. This was a great program. Jim and Nancy brought with them several examples of projects they did at Camp Paradise. If you want to up your skills in the lapidary arts, plan to go to Camp Paradise. Thank You, Jim and Nancy, for a great program.



Jim and Nancy Brace-Thompson were our featured speakers at our September meeting, providing an inside look at the annual CFMS Camp Paradise Lapidary and Jewelry Workshops.

Registration opens starting March 17, 2026, with two one-week sessions on August 14-30



Jim Brace-Thompson

Future Programs

October Program: Mr. Duke Mulholland will present "Self-Collected Fossils of Simi Valley and Chatsworth."

Our meeting on October 22, 2025, will be a presentation by Mr. Duke Mulholland. Duke was an exhibitor at this year's Ventura County Fair and won a first award in the self-collected fossil category. He has been collecting fossils in the Simi Valley and Chatsworth area of the Santa Susana Mountains for the last 30 years. Duke has a permanent display of collected fossils at the Chatsworth Historical Society for October Pioneer Days. He will also bring choice specimens he has collected for the talk. His program promises to be very informative and entertaining.

November Program

Remember the next club meeting is on the second Wednesday, November 12th. There will be a large silent auction loaded with great stuff. Come add to your collection. You can bid on selected items and purchase them with cash, check, or Zeffy payment methods available.

December Program

Our December 10th meeting will be our Annual Christmas party, potluck, and awards, as well as installation of new officers.

If you know of someone or have seen or heard any interesting talks or demonstrations that would be appropriate for our club, please let me know. Also, if you would like to do a program for club meeting, please let me know.



October speaker Duke Mulholland with one of his finds

Looking for a 2026 Scholarship Recipient

Nancy Brace-Thompson, Scholarship Chair

It's time to find our 2026 scholarship recipient and I wanted to let everyone know what an applicant needs to apply.

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

- They shall be majoring in one of the earth sciences or a field directly relevant to the mission of VGMS (e.g. science education, gemology and lapidary arts, etc.).
- They shall have maintained a grade point average of 3.0 or better during high school or undergraduate work.

- They shall submit a 250-word essay describing his/her educational goals:
- They shall have two separate letter-of-recommendation from instructors in the earth science fields, science teachers, counselors, and/or community leaders.

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

SHOW**VGMS Annual Show: Stocking Up for the Kids' Booth****Jim Brace-Thompson**

It's become more-or-less of an annual event: a grab bag stuffing party to fill as many bags as possible for the Kids Booth at our annual gem show. I spend the year begging, gathering, tumbling, sorting, labeling, and packaging specimens, and then a whole group gathers to enjoy a potluck lunch and to assemble all into the bags we sell at the show. Nancy and I hosted this year's party on our back patio on October 4, and we saw over a dozen members (including two pebble pups) enjoy light lunch fixings while assembling over 630 grab bags. With the existing bags we had in storage up at the clubhouse, this should bring us pretty close to 1,000, so I think we're in good stead. Still, I've already begun assembling new specimens for our next party...



Do you have items to donate as Spinning Wheel prizes for our show's Kids Booth?

As I write, Nancy and I have plans to meet up with Susan and Art Lopez in a couple of days 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, polished rocks, minerals, crystals, fossils, basic jewelry, etc., and we welcome donations. What's in your rock pile?



Thank you to the nice group of folks who helped at this year's grab bag stuffing party!

The Gold Coast Gem Show**Diane Cook**

Mark your calendars! The Gold Coast Gem Show returns to the Ventura County Fairgrounds on Saturday and Sunday, November 15-16, 2025 (10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Saturday and 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Sunday).

The Ventura Gem & Mineral Society will once again host an information booth, kids booth and selling T-Shirts, misc. at the show, and we need a great team of volunteers to help greet visitors, share our love of rocks and minerals, and represent VGMS to the community.

Volunteer shifts are typically 2-3 hours long, and all volunteers receive free parking for the day. It's a fun

way to connect with the public, promote our club, and enjoy the show!

Susan Lopez is coordinating the VGMS booth for this year. We will be emailing out the signup link soon. You can reach out to Susan directly or contact Diane Cook for more information.

Let's show our VGMS spirit and make this another great event for the community—your help makes all the difference! Please sign up at:

<https://volunteersignup.org/3X87P>

The Hunt for a New Home

An All-Hands-on-Deck Issue: Seeking Everyone's Help Finding a New Home Base

Jim Brace-Thompson

As you may or may not know, we are under some serious pressure to find a new home base for our society. Our current digs for our workshop studio, museum, library, and storage space are on property of the Ventura County Parks Department. That department has plans to demolish the buildings there and perhaps even sell off the property or use it for expanded parking for Camp Comfort. They've been very gracious with the terms of our lease these past 17 years and in providing some breathing room for us to search for a new home base, but that breathing room is quickly expiring. We have about a year and a half before we'll likely need to vacate and make a move.

But a move to where? Diane Cook has spent a lot of time exploring different avenues, and we now have an ad-hoc committee consisting of Diane, David Springer, Art Lopez, and me 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, we'd love to hear from you. This is truly an all-hands-on-deck issue, and the clock is ticking. We occupied a different location from the 1980s until the early 2000s, and it took a good long time to find our current home. In the meantime, we were without a workshop or museum and bled a good deal of money into two storage units for all our club resources. We definitely want to avoid replaying that tape!

On October 7, David, Art, and I attended a Ventura Unified School District (VUSD) Town Hall meeting that was seeking public commentary on what to do with several "surplus" properties that VUSD no longer uses.



Not too long from now, we'll need to bid a fond farewell to this facility. Can you help us find a new home base?

These include the former Washington School (96 MacMillan Ave.) and Avenue School (2647 N. Ventura Ave.). A long line of individuals stepped up for two minutes each to offer their thoughts or to make pitches for their particular organization or idea. I made a pitch for one of those school properties to be devoted to nonprofit community service organizations after sketching the varied community services and educational outreach activities VGMS offers. However, Art, David, and I agree this particular opportunity looks like a long shot. (With declining enrollments, VUSD needs money, and selling to real estate developers is where that's at.)

We'll have a clearer idea as to VUSD's plans for these vacant properties with the beginning of the New Year, but for now, we need to continue digging for new leads and making contacts within the community. Can you help? If so, contact David right away. Together, we will make this happen!

WORKSHOP HAPPENINGS

After a Slow Start, Workshop Participation Surges

Jim Brace-Thompson

It appears the decline in workshop participation that I noted last month continued into the early fall. With Nancy and me driving to Monterey to participate in the annual show of the Carmel Valley Gem & Mineral Society, I missed the September 20 workshop, but here's what I've gleaned from the log book: Stewards Tyrone, David, and Ron oversaw just three members, for a one-to-one ratio of stewards to participants. But maybe we'll soon have more? Why? Because on September 27, Steward John Cook was busy giving cabbing orientation lessons to Bill Allaway and Brett Hilton to enable them to start using the machines.



John helps ID a rock for Julie.

Sure enough, our October 5 workshop saw a surge. Not only did we have nearly all hands on deck among our Shop Stewards with Ron, Tyrone, and David, we saw a total of a dozen members participating with projects in the saw room, on the flat lap, and at the Genies. While doing a bit of lapidary work, Robert Seaton was also seen doing a bit of maintenance around the place and—in addition to flat-lapping a few rocks—Troy Schmidt was spotted doing a bit of museum room work while Tyrone was busy trying to bring some renewed vigor into one of our big slab saws.



After a bit of a workshop lull, things were humming once again on October 5

Folks haunting the workshop studios as we near Halloween included Bill Allaway, John Cook, Julie Cox, Emily Delatores, Holly Green, Brett Hilton, Shirley Layton, Rich Pisor, Michael Rittenberg, Robert Seaton, David Springer, Tyrone LaFay, Troy Schmidt, Dylan Schroeder, Bella Welch, Lauren Wideman, Ron Wise, and me. Come on in, folks! The Holiday Season fast approaches, and what better gifts to craft than shiny colorful cabochons for the stockings?



Every seat was taken at our October 5 workshop session.

FEDERATION NEWS

Helping Other Clubs: A Weekend Working the CVGMS Show in Monterey

Jim Brace-Thompson, VGMS Federation Director

It's always fun to travel to another show sponsored by our affiliated clubs to view their displays and shop among dealers we don't always see at our show. It's even more fun to participate!

Nancy and I loaded Tornjak into the car along with materials for two display cases and hit the road for Monterey on September 19. The Carmel Valley Gem & Mineral Society was the first rock club we ever joined—way back in the last century in 1991. We've remained members even after moving the Ventura in 1998, and we've attended every single show for the past 34 years. This year, I installed my "Fossil Lore & Legend" exhibit and Nancy installed her carved bears, and we spent most of the weekend helping with their silent auction, where we made all of our purchases. I think this is the very first show where we didn't buy a single thing from a dealer. I guess the garage is full. What can you give a collector who's already collected everything? In addition, we stayed in town on Sunday night, so we were also able to help with dismantling display cases and general tear-down duties.



Nancy and Tor show off our displays at the CVGMS Show.

The CVGMS show is smaller than ours but still had a fair bit of activity. Crowds were steady, and in addition to dealers, they could take kids to a big kids' area, bid for specimens and lapidary rough at the silent auction, and have geodes cut at an outdoor saw station. 35 exhibits were on display, but several members put in

multiple displays, so there wasn't as much member participation as one would hope. For instance, about half of those exhibits were entered by just a half dozen individuals. Here's hoping more members will get inspired by this year's displays and install their own in 2026. As I've always said, you don't need a huge collection to display; even three large pieces, nicely arranged with nice panel labels, make for a fine display.

If you've never been, I encourage you to check it out next year. You'll enjoy an escape from So-Cal heat with great Central Coast marine weather featuring thick morning fog that enhanced our early morning walks on Asilomar Beach. Are you a nature lover? The sea lions are out in abundance on the Monterey peninsula at this time of year, along with seals and sea otters. Inland, you'll need to drive slowly to swerve around the many deer. And if you're a dog owner, great news! Dogs are allowed at the show (and at many of the local hotels). We had just one problem: for the last three years, I've been looking forward to spending Monday winding our way home down the Coast Highway to snap up serpentine for our show's teacher station (and hopefully a jade pebble or two) at Jade Cove and Willow Creek, but stretches of the highway remain closed due to rock slides. As my three-year-old granddaughter in Scotland says, "Not nice!" Here's hoping we can enjoy that coastal route next year.



Don't tell David Springer, but someone got a wee little Morgan Hill poppy jasper at the CVGMS silent auction!

Together We Shine – VGMS Style

Diane Cook

As I look ahead to serving as CFMS President in 2026, my theme will be "Together We Shine." And when I think of that phrase, I can't help but think of VGMS. Our club is truly one of the top in the state—respected not only for our shows, exhibits, and outreach, but for the way we work together as a team.

VGMS shines because of you—your enthusiasm, your talents, and your willingness to step up when needed. I've already recruited two wonderful volunteers from our club to help with CFMS in 2026, and I know there are more shining stars among us.

Thank you for everything you do to make VGMS so special. Together, we really do shine!

Latest News from the Federation—and How You Can Help!

Jim Brace-Thompson, VGMS Federation Director

As reported last month, the Fall Directors Meeting of our umbrella organization—the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies (CFMS)—takes place November 7-9 in Visalia. Nancy and I will be in Portland, Oregon, for a baby shower our son and daughter-in-law are throwing (our new granddaughter-to-be is due in January), so Erin Valenzuela has volunteered to substitute for me as our club's Federation Director during the business meeting.

A big highlight will be the Saturday night banquet, where our own Diane Cook will be installed as CFMS President commencing 2026. Go, Diane! And, by the way, she can use your help. She'll be charged with filling some 45 committee posts, and several of those posts have been vacant throughout 2025. If you'd like to take a first step into getting involved at the Federation level, taking on a committee post provides a great introduction. To learn about committee positions, check in with Diane. She'll need all committees filled by January. Also, last I heard CFMS is still seeking a candidate to come forward for the elected position of Treasurer. Who likes to play with other people's money? Here's your opportunity!



Diane will soon be the star of an installation ceremony like this one from last year's CFMS Directors Meeting in Visalia.

MEETING MINUTES

VGMS General Meeting, September 24, 2025, at the Poinsettia Pavilion

Called to order at 7:27 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 35 members, 1 Pebble Pup, and 2 guests.

Audrey Harvey motioned to accept the minutes from the August 27, 2025, General Meeting as printed in the bulletin. Robert Seaton second. Motion passed.

Announcements

- Clubhouse open, the first Sunday 10/5 (12-3 pm), the 2nd Wednesday, cancelled until the spring, and third Saturday 10/18, will not be open. It will be Rocktober Fest.
- Purchase your equipment usage card from Celia.
- Diane handed out volunteer awards from the fair to people who did not make it to the volunteer thank you event. 5 years, the Churchills and David Springer; 10 years, Terry Wilson; 15 years, Steward Bloom; 20 years, Ron Wise; 25 years, David Mautz.

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.

New Business

- Tyler Frank is selling a 24" Diamond rock saw for \$3,000. Will be listed in the Chips and Boulders section of our Rockhound Rambling newsletter.
- Upcoming rock sale in Lompoc from a gentleman who will be selling some of his father's collection. The gentleman will be coming down from Oregon. David will let us know the date.
- Jim says there is a woman the Carmel Valley is selling her titan and cabochon collection.
- Rockhound and Pebble Pup/Jr of the Year nomination forms for this year are on the website. David will bring hardcopies for next meeting.
- Nominating Committee, we need 2 Board Members (Erin and Celia) and 3 Members (Dick). Julie and Susan volunteered to be on the committee.
- Grab bag stuffing party 10/4 at 11 am. Let Nancy know.

Officer Reports

- 1st VP - Programs - John Cook
 - September meeting was Jim and Nancy Brace-Thompson talking about their experience at Camp Paradise. They encourage everyone to go.
 - October meeting is to be announced and John will be acting President at this meeting.
 - November meeting is a silent auction.
- 2nd VP - Field Trips - Tyrone LaFay
 - The weekend of October 11, Tyrone will lead a field trip to Clear Creek to collect plasma agate. However, over 100 different types of minerals are found in this area. Plan ahead, there are a few permits that are needed.

- 3rd VP, Show Chair, Diane Cook:
 - We are having show meetings, if you want to help, let Diane know.
 - We will have a grab stuffing party at Jim and Nancy's house.
- Membership Secretary - Erin Valenzuela
 - 203 Adult members, 38 Pebble Pups and 13 Juniors for a total of 254.
- Treasurer - Celia Churchill
 - Buy your usage cards.
- Secretary - Sheri Hultman
 - Nothing to report.
- Bulletin Editor - Monika Blackburn (absent)
 - Due date for next bulletin is Oct. 10, send submissions to vgmseditor@gmail.com
 - Reminder, if you have anything hobby related you would like to sell, there is a section called Chips and Boulders for that.
 - New section called Rockhounds and Their Hounds.
- Federation Director - Jim Brace-Thompson
 - Federation meeting November 7-9. Diane Cook will be the new President.
 - Camp Paradise was a great success.
 - CFMS Jr. Achievement Award application on the back table. They are due March 1.
 - Crack The News, a newsletter for kids by kids, is looking for articles.
 - 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 now up to date.
- Parliamentarian/Scholarship - Nancy Brace-Thompson
 - Scholarship information will be going out soon.
 - There were several changes made. A quorum was 2/3 of the members, now it will be 1/10. Dues will go up for the 2026 year. The proposed change will be first member will go from \$20 to \$35. Each additional member was \$10 and will go up to \$15. There will now be an application fee of \$5 for new or lapsed members. Membership will be due Feb.1 instead of March 1. An email will be sent out to have the members vote on this.

Committee Reports

- Pebble Pups - Erin Valenzuela (absent) - David Springer reported
 - At the Aug. 30 meeting we did the Sand and Sediment Badge. We had 15 students. Jim came and helped run the workshop. Thank you, Jim!
 - Sept. meeting will this weekend 9/27 at 11:00 am. Please check the Band app for more information.
- Juniors - Lisa Batchelder-Hetrick (absent):
 - Nothing to report.
- Ways and Means- Jenifer Russell:
 - Thank you, David S. and Audrey Harvey for the donations! Always accepting donations.
- Museum - Troy Schmidt:
 - Nothing to report.
- Educational Outreach - Jim Brace-Thompson
 - Congratulations to Skyla for having her Mary Anning display tour several libraries.
 - Minerals Day Oct. 13 at the Santa Barbara Natural History Museum, we will have a table at the event with minerals and information about our club.

Committee Reports (cont'd.)

- Hostess - Susan Slyker
 - Thank you to Art and Susan Lopez for snacks this month.
 - October snack will be provided by Erin Valenzuela.
- Librarian - Heather (absent) & Robert Seaton:
 - Dragon Minerals has a new book. It is about cleaning and prepping of mineral specimens. Troy and Diane both have copies and recommend we purchase for our library.
- Facility Maintenance - Robert Seaton
 - Need to replace beam in saw room by the new year.
- Stewards - Ron Wise, John Cook, Tyrone LaFay and David Springer:
 - They are working on replacing bearings in one of the saws.

Next members meeting is Wednesday, October 22nd, at 7:30 at the Poinsettia Pavilion.

Julie Cox motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:28 pm. Robert Seaton 2nd.

Respectfully submitted on September 29, 2025, by Sheri Hultman, Recording Secretary.

VGMS Board Meeting, October 2, 2025, via Zoom

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

Attendees: David Springer, John & Diane Cook, Sheri Hultman, Robert Seaton, Dick & Phyllis White, Jim & Nancy Brace-Thompson, Shirley Layton, Monika Blackburn, Celia Churchill, Terry Wilson, Tyrone LaFay and Troy Schmidt

Troy Schmidt motioned to approve the September 4, 2025, Board Meeting minutes as they are printed in the bulletin. Monika Blackburn seconded. Motion passed.

Old Business

- David is still collecting all passwords and sign ins for the club accounts. Jim Brace-Thompson will keep them.
- Hats are on order. Diane will take a picture and email out. They may be for sale at Rocktober Fest.
- We have our nominating committee for the 2026 year. Erin and Celia for board members and Susan Lopez, Julie Cox and Dick White for general members. They will be reaching out to see who is staying on the board.
- We have one "Rockhound of the Year" nomination. Please everyone send in nominations. Deadline 11/1.

New Business

- Nancy sent out an email to have everyone vote on By-Laws. Resending in a few days.
- David got some ideas from the Pasadena Show. Maybe we should put together a case highlighting awards the club as received. It could be used as a filler or put out on the hospitality table. We could also put on our website. They put together a frame showing what is in the grab bags, we already do something similar.
- Diane brought up that we could put the profit from this first round of hat sales toward paying for a raffle prize of a week at Camp Paradise, as well as selling tickets. We will continue to discuss this.

Officer Reports

- 1st VP - Programs - John Cook
 - October 22 meeting will be a talk "Fossils of Simi Valley" by Todd Mulholland.
 - November meeting will be a Silent Auction.
 - December meeting will be the Christmas Party.
- 2nd VP - Field Trips - Tyrone LaFay
 - The weekend of October 11, Tyrone will lead a field trip to Clear Creek management area. SeeWhoscoming.com for details. Be aware we may not be able to get in with the government shut down. Tyrone will try and get more information.
 - Oct. 18 Conejo is leading a trip to Rainbow Ledge.
 - Nov. 2 the Indian Wells club may be having a field trip to their jasper claim. Tyrone will follow up to get more information.
 - Jim sent some information about Kanan Road to Tyrone. He checked it out. It was too hot and lots of brush. He said he would maybe try again at another site. He didn't get a lot of positive feedback from other people who have gone. Thank you, Jim, for sending Tyrone the information.
 - Diane suggests talking Todd at the meeting so see if we could do a Simi Valley fossil trip.
 - David is working on a field trip to a museum and sale in Lompoc, possibly Nov. 15. He will keep us informed.
- 3rd VP - Show- Diane Cook
 - Grab bag stuffing party at Jim and Nancy's 10/4 at 11 am.
 - Show meeting 11/19 at 7pm on Zoom.
 - David suggested we put in some attention-grabbing prize in a few grab bags to increase sales; we will talk about this at the upcoming show meeting.
 - Gold Coast show coming up. Nancy Brace-Thompson motioned we have 2 tables at the show. Celia seconded. Motion passed. We will sell t-shirts and have a kids' booth.
- Treasurer -Celia Churchill
 - Celia will send out quotes from on-line banking about high yield savings accounts.
 - Diane paid the insurance this month for directors and property.
- Secretary - Sheri Hultman
 - Nothing to report.
- Web Director - Troy Schmidt
 - Troy will add upcoming programs.
- Membership Secretary - Erin Valenzuela (absent) - David Springer reported
 - Diane Cook motioned to accept new members, Griffin Easthouse, Carrie Blakemore and Lauren Woods. Nancy Brace-Thompson seconded. The motion passed.
 - After the above were voted in, we have 209 adult members, 40 Pebble Pups, and 13 Juniors. Total 260 members.
- Federation Director - Jim Brace-Thompson
 - Director's meeting will be 11/7-11/9, in Visalia. They are electing a whole new board.
- Bulletin Editor - Monika Blackburn
 - Deadline for newsletter is the 10th of the month, ygmseditor@gmail.com.
 - Thank you for your articles and pictures.
- Parliamentarian/Scholarship - Nancy Brace-Thompson
 - Nancy will send an article to the bulletin about the scholarship and will send emails out to colleges.

Committee Reports

- Pebble Pups - Erin Valenzuela (absent)
 - October meeting TBA
 - We are trying to go to Raymond Alf Museum.
- Juniors - Lisa Batchelder-Hetrick (absent) and Erin Valenzuela
 - Nothing to Report.
- Museum - Troy Schmidt
 - Nothing to Report.
- Educational Outreach - Jim Brace-Thompson
 - John Cook is taking a group to the Santa Barbara Natural History Museum on Oct. 13 for Earth Science Week.
- Historian/Archivist - Jim Brace-Thompson
 - Nothing to Report.
- Librarians - Heather (absent) & Robert Seaton
 - Robert ordered Dragon Minerals book.
- Clubhouse Maintenance: Robert Seaton
 - 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. One mouse fell into a bucket with water and died, however it made the club house smell.
- Stewards - John, Ron, Tyrone, and David
 - Tyrone will fix the 14" saw.
 - They are looking to move the 20" saw into the saw room, now that Evan picked up the tumbler.

Troy Schmidt motioned to adjourn the meeting. Nancy Brace-Thompson seconded. Motion passed at 8:05 pm.

Next Board Meeting: November 6, 2025, at 7 pm

Next Membership Meeting: October 22, 2025, at 7:30 pm

Respectfully submitted on October 9. By Sheri Hultman, Recording Secretary

ROCKHOUND RAMBLINGS

No Dinosaurs in Hawaii??

Erin Valenzuela

The Hawaiian Islands were formed by volcanoes after the dinosaur extinction, so they're too young—and the wrong rock type—to contain dinosaur fossils. However, I did manage to find some dinosaurs in Hawaii! The Bishop Museum in Honolulu happened to have an *Expedition Dinosaur* exhibit while we were there. I realized upon arrival that I had seen part of this exhibit before last September at the Discovery Cube Los Angeles. Later, I learned that the *Expedition Dinosaur* exhibits are mobile/traveling displays produced by Stage 9 Exhibits.

The Bishop Museum featured *Expedition Dinosaur: Into the Deep*—so now I'm only missing *Rise of the Mammals*, and I'm on the hunt! The first section focused on the Jurassic Period, with animatronic *T. rex*, *Stegosaurus*, *Dakotaraptors*, and more. There were plenty of fun, interactive activities for kids. *Into the Deep* explored the underwater world of ancient marine reptiles, spotlighting plesiosaurs, ichthyosaurs, *Spinosaurus*, *Liopleurodon*, and *Archelon* (the world's largest turtle). We explored the ancient seas through displays and a cool video experience, discovering marine reptile ecosystems and diets, and learning where and how the fossils were found—and how all of it contributes to our understanding of Cretaceous marine life.



The Bishop Museum is gorgeous- Hawaiian history, science and culture.



The Dinosaur exhibit was in a newer hall.



Favorites from the exhibit

My other dinosaur sighting was at Kualoa Ranch. This 4,000-acre working cattle ranch on Oahu's North Shore also supports agriculture and aquaculture, with a shop and restaurant on-site. It's an amazing place to visit, but my main reason for going was to see its famous filming locations. I can guarantee you've seen a movie or TV show filmed at Kualoa Ranch—*Lost*, *Jumanji*, *King Kong*, *Pearl Harbor*, *Magnum P.I.* (both versions), and *50 First Dates*, to name a few. My personal favorites, though, are the original *Jurassic Park* and the first two *Jurassic World* movies.



Triceratops skull from King Kong:Skull Island



Bunker from Jurassic World and the Ford from Jurassic Park

We took the "Jurassic Adventure Tour," which was full of sets and props from the films. One highlight was the spot where Dr. Grant, Lex, and Tim see the "gal—uh, galli—uh, Gallimimus!" dinosaurs fleeing from the *T. rex*. We saw bunkers, vehicles, fake trees, dinosaurs, and rocks, plus the fish ponds used for the mosasaur show scenes (later enhanced with CGI seats and cheering fans). Another standout location was the "Indominus rex" Compound from the first *Jurassic World*—I stood exactly where Claire watched the rex and saw the claw marks on the wall.



Indominus Rex Paddock favorite photos

It was totally worth the tour price to live out a few of my Jurassic Park dreams at the very place where the movies were made!



I got to run from the T-Rex like Dr Grant. Our guide was awesome!



The Kualoa Valley is beautiful and very iconic!

Lego's Mineral Collection

Erin Valenzuela

Lego has just released a set tailor-made for gem and mineral enthusiasts! The new Ideas set, "Mineral Collection," was designed by Italian engineer Dario Del Frate and selected by Lego in 2024 after earning over 10,000 fan votes. I was one of those voters—and I've been (impatiently) counting the days ever since. I preordered it in September, and it arrived right on my birthday—perfect timing!

The set is both beautiful and fun to build, featuring six minerals displayed on individual stands: watermelon tourmaline, pyrite, amethyst, rhodochrosite, tangerine quartz, and fluorite. While the colors aren't all spot-on (the rhodochrosite leans a little too red), Lego did an impressive job capturing the character of each mineral. It's an absolute must-have for any Lego-loving rockhound or mineral collector!



It was a fun set to build!

VGMS HISTORY

Blast from the Past: The Club Officer

Jim Brace-Thompson, VGMS Historian/Archivist

With our annual election of officers coming up, I thought it might be a good time to dip into our club archives and reprint this article that appeared in our July 1985 newsletter, as reprinted from the BRECCIA, the newsletter of the Santa Clara Gem & Mineral Society. What are “officers” and what are their duties? Let’s find out...

“Officer”...one who holds an office of authority or trust in a corporation, government, or other institution...from “The American Heritage Dictionary.” That’s what it says in the book, but is that complete?

“Officer,” ACTUAL:

One who allows him/herself to be talked into a job in a moment of weakness or confused conscience because “It’s my turn and I just as soon get it over with”...Ah, but too late, the commitment comes roaring in...”I AM NOW RESPONSIBLE FOR WHICH DIRECTION THIS GROUP OF PEOPLE IS HEADING.”

The officer is no longer a face in the crowd...protected by many...but in front of the crowd, under everyone’s magnifying glass.

The officer can no longer enjoy the fellowship or programs because of the constant needs of the members. There are meetings of the board, the extra meetings for the show...then the many phone calls...right in the middle of that favorite TV program or during dinner.

Above are some of the things the officer must do... Now let’s look at what he/she can’t do:

- 1.Can’t, except for death, near-death, or bowling night...miss any club event without being pilloried.
- 2.Can’t, if president, vote on any issue...no matter how important it is to him/her.
- 3.Can’t please everyone. All clubs have at least three opposing views. Therefore, the officer is always out of step with two-thirds of the members.
- 4.Can’t cut short long speeches by irate members or prolong his/her speeches to try to make an important point.
- 5.Can’t be humorous without offending the serious or be serious without boring the humorous.

THE OFFICER IS A SERIOUS, HUMOROUS, TALKATIVE, QUIET OPTIMIST WHO THOUGHT HE/SHE COULD DO AN EFFECTIVE JOB....

THE OFFICER IN REALITY, GAVE UP, FOR ONE YEAR, HIS/HER MEMBERSHIP PRIVILEGES AND FELLOWSHIP BECAUSE HE/SHE THOUGHT ENOUGH OF THE CLUB AND MEMBERS TO OFFER HIS/HER SERVICES.

There is an example of the difference between “commitment” and “participation” that covers the status of the OFFICER vs the MEMBER. Take the favorite breakfast...Ham ‘n Eggs...the hen participates, the pig is committed.

THE OFFICERS ARE COMMITTED!!!

When you feel those people up front aren’t doing the job you are paying them for...remember what you are paying them...and what they are giving.

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

Helping Out within our Broader Community: The Three Amigos Ride Again!

Jim Brace-Thompson, Educational Outreach Chair

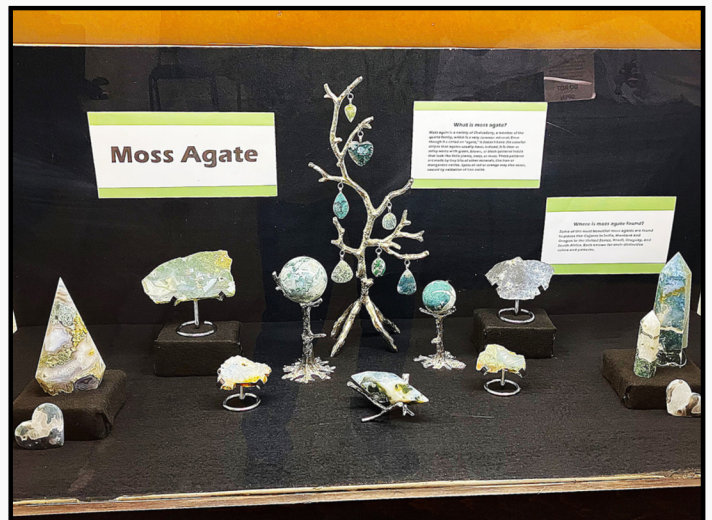
On September 16, John Cook and I once again saddled up the horses and hit the dusty trail north to Bakersfield to serve as judges for gems, minerals, fossils and lapidary arts at the Kern County Fair. Arriving at the fairgrounds, we corralled our horses with Wes Lingerfelt's of the Orcutt Mineral Society to round out The Three Amigos. Clipboards and scoresheets in hand, black sombreros flopping in the Central Valley breeze, and pencils drawn, for the next several hours we went case-by-case taking shots at all manner of rocky displays. Fortunately for The Amigos, the Kern County Fair only has case displays to judge (no individual items, as at the Ventura County Fair), so judging proceeds fairly quickly.

We've judged here many years now and saw the fair take a real hit from the pandemic. Prior to COVID, we would have 40 to 45 displays to judge. That number dwindled to 21 in 2021, then crept up to 27 in 2022 only to go back down to 21 in 2023. While low in quantity, high in quality. But the past two years the number has bounced back up, with 37 display cases last year and 35 this year. Folks offered beautiful self-collected rocks and minerals and well-crafted jewelry nicely arranged. It was especially cool seeing local material, like fossils from Shark Tooth Hill, a range of petrified wood and palm from the ancient Kern River channel, and other Kern County bounty.

Gems & Minerals is a division in most California county fairs. Next year, in addition to checking out our own Ventura County Fair, consider visiting the many others across the state to see what neighboring like-minded souls are up to. It may inspire ideas for a display of your own!



The Three Amigos confront a display case with guns drawn.



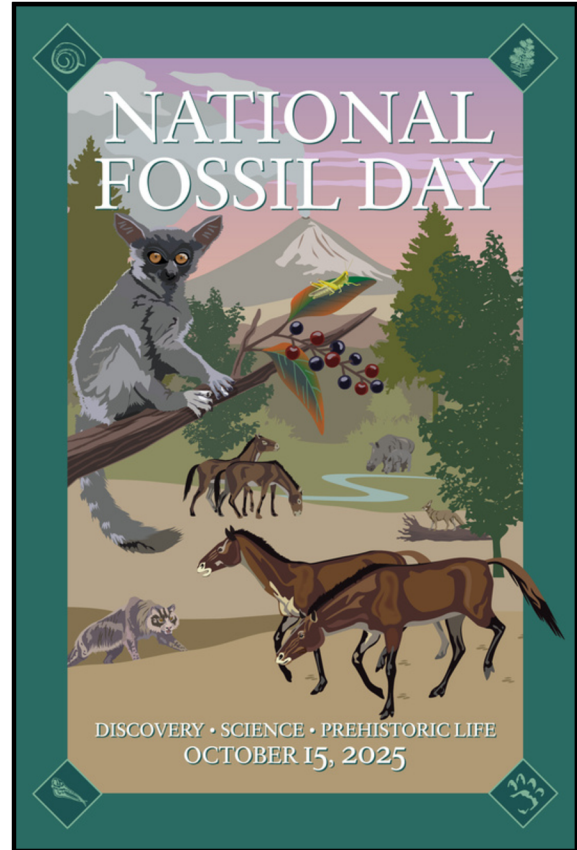
A couple Kern County Fair displays earned 100%, like this beauty featuring moss agate.

JUST FOR FUN**National Fossil Day 2025****Erin Valenzuela**

National Fossil Day, an annual tradition since 2010, celebrates paleontology, its education, and the importance of preserving fossils for future generations. The Wednesday of the second full week of October—which is Earth Science Week—is designated as National Fossil Day. Every year, a national park is chosen to showcase its fossil record, and that year's poster/logo is dedicated to that park. The John Day Fossil Beds Monument in southern Oregon is this year's national park spotlight. The monument was established on October 8, 1975—happy 50th anniversary! The monument covers 14,000 acres with plenty of plant and mammal fossils from about 44 – 7 million years ago.

The area featured in the poster represents the Oligocene Epoch and is the Turtle Cove horizon of the John Day Formation rock layer. Ash flow and claystones have helped preserve the fossils in the ancient Pacific Northwest forests, which were unique and unusual for the area. The Oligocene Epoch spans 34 to 23 million years ago—a time when the tropical, wet climates of North America changed to the drier, cooler grassland habitats.

The John Day Fossil Beds contain some of America's last primate fossils—a small lemur-like mammal called *Ekgmowechashala*, which means “little cat man” in the Sioux language. The poster shows him on a hackberry tree, which was native to his time. The grasshopper is significant because the first fossilized grasshopper egg clutch was found at the John Day Fossil Beds. Other early mammals like horses, rhinos, dogs, and cats are also featured on the poster.



I find it humorous that the historical fur trapper and trader John Day never made it to the area that bears his name. The nearby river was first named after him, and the monument was later named for the river. Thomas Condon, a minister and amateur geologist, was the first to discover the importance of the fossil beds after he was shown fossils by cavalry soldiers. He was later honored by having the visitor center named after him.

I usually recommend visiting a national park on National Fossil Day; unfortunately, because of the government shutdown, services are limited or closed at national parks, monuments, etc. So this year, celebrate at a museum, attend a fossil event, listen to a fossil podcast, or just enjoy some fossils from your own collection!

PEBBLE PUPS

Erin Valenzuela, Pebble Pups

Our September meeting was a small but mighty group of seven Pups that worked on the Special Effects badge. With some help from Jim Brace-Thompson and his collection of magic minerals, we discussed and examined minerals and rocks that are magnetic, float, refract light, glow other colors, make sparks, sing, and have other special or “magical” effects. As a fun craft we painted with magnets. We also sent everyone home with a “wint-o-green” Lifesaver to see if the triboluminescence sparks would work at home as they didn’t in the clubhouse hallway.

I was able to connect the tour/education director at the ALF Museum and she did have two possible dates for October and November. I sent out a poll on Band and only a few people are able to go on either date so I think we might try to do it early next year or maybe during winter break instead when everyone's schedules are a bit better. So instead, our October meeting will be on October 25th at the Clubhouse. We'll be revisiting the Fossils badge and celebrating National Fossil Day!



Jim showing the pups about magnetic rocks and minerals.



We had many stations of the different effects- these pups are learning about fluorescence.

The Monthly Challenge: This Monthly Challenge Blew Its Top!

Jim Brace-Thompson

The prize for our September Monthly Challenge? Volcanic ash blown sky-high during the 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens. Perhaps our pebble pups' parents weren't even twinkles in the eyes of their parents then, but I remember it well. Those Pebble Pups and Juniors who successfully took up the Challenge and thus earned a piece of American geological history were Otto, Gwyn, Colin, Grayson, Noah, Bowie, Wren, Dashel, Connor, Silas, Julia, Landon, and Lexi!

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, where they came from, how old they are (if a fossil), and so forth.

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 (jbraceth@roadrunner.com) to get you on the email list.



Last month, kids successfully taking up the Monthly Challenge enlarged their collections by adding little vials of volcanic ash from the Mount St. Helens eruption of 1980.

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 Rich Pisor for donating a coffee can filled with polished stones for our Monthly Challenge!

Thank you to everyone who helped at the grab bag stuffing party at the B-T home. Thanks to their efforts, we have a good supply for the Kids Booth heading into our 2026 Show.

CLUB CALENDARS

10 OCTOBER 2025

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
			1	2 Board meeting, 7p	3 Erin Valenzuela and Henry I.	4
5 Member Workshop 12-3p	6	7	8	9 Arielle Nathanson and Beecher I.	10 Denise Rosen	11 Field Trip: Clear Creek
12 Field Trip: Clear Creek	13	14 Tony Hetrick and Harrison Tasoff	15	16	17 Floyd Graham	18 Rocktoberfest
19	20 Debbie Sander	21	22 Member meeting, 7:30p	23	24	25
26	27 Renee Frisk-Jones	28	29	30 Ben Irie	31	

11 NOVEMBER 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2 Member Workshop 12-3p	3	4	5	6 Board meeting, 7p	7	8 Megan Hewitson
9	10 Bill Allaway	11 Susan Cowlishaw	12 Member meeting, 7:30p	13	14	15 Open Workshop 9a-12p
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24 Elyssa J	25 Michael Kovacs	26	27 Michael Rittenberg	28	29
30 Ron Wise						