

February 2024



# THE TIDEWATER PROSPECTOR

Newsletter for the Tidewater Gem and Mineral Society  
Virginia Beach, VA

## President's Notes

by Robin Stoughton

### In this issue:

- Page 2 Awards & Recognition
- Page 3 Important Dates
- Page 3 Program Info
- Page 4 Rock Snakes
- Page 5 TOTE Show



Happy Valentines Day to everyone! Happy Birthday to all who are celebrating one this month.

Thanks to Kelley Finch for doing a very informative and great program on Minerals Matter with aerogel as a highlight last month.

A possible trip to the Smithsonian may happen at a future date. There will be a small cost to each member who goes but all the details still have to be worked out as prices have increased tremendously as far as renting a bus. You MUST be current on your dues to attend so make sure you get those paid if you haven't already. They were due in January.

We need members to volunteer to do programs at our monthly meetings. If you can help out, contact Jessica Bates at: [jeepluv77@gmail.com](mailto:jeepluv77@gmail.com). or call her at: 757-354-9622.

Our first treasures of the earth show is March 23 - 25 with setup on the 22nd. We MUST have members doing displays and demonstrations. We have large and small cases available. We also need members to help with getting stuff out of storage, setup, volunteering at the tables all weekend, pack up and back to storage. Please contact Kelley Finch at 757-630-6607 or [kellyfinch@gmail.com](mailto:kellyfinch@gmail.com)

Hospitality: Thanks to all members who brought snacks last month. Members are welcome to bring snacks to any of our meetings.

REMINDER: All newsletter articles need to be to Judy by the 3rd of each month unless asked to get them in earlier.



## FEBRUARY 2024



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16 TGMS Meeting	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

The newsletter can also be found online: <http://tgms.weebly.com/>

## TREASURER'S REPORT



### **PRESIDENT**

Robin Stoughton  
(757) 822-9631

### **1st VICE PRESIDENT (Membership)**

Kelley Finch  
(757) 630-6607

### **2nd VICE PRESIDENT (Program/Entertainment)**

Jessica Bates  
(757) 354-9622

### **TREASURER (Finance)**

Lloyd Schiffelbian  
(757) 495-7946

### **SECRETARY (History/Library)**

Brooks Britt  
(757) 759-4779

### **WORKSHOPS**

Madison Hall &  
Jody Anderson  
(757) 582-8420

### **SHOWS**

Kelley Finch  
(757) 630-6607

### **NEWSLETTER**

Judy Hyszcak  
(757) 533-1512

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Kelley Finch  
(757) 630-6607

### **WAYS & MEANS**

Amanda Arab  
(757) 383-3713

### **LIBRARIAN**

OPEN

### **HOSPITALITY**

Robin Stoughton  
(757) 822-9631

### **WEBSITE**

Brooks Britt  
(757) 745-7104

January was a busy month for the club's treasury with members renewing their memberships. The club raised \$577.50 as 36 adults and 5 children paid their dues. The paid raffle raised \$58, T-shirt sales raised \$10 and specimen sales raised \$6. Please welcome the following new members to the club: John Kelly (child), Susan Lasater, and Tristen & Claire Phillips.

Club expenses were routine, except for \$185 for a floral arrangement for Emory Dixon's funeral and \$21.19 for printer ink. Emory Dixon, as many of you know, was a long-standing club member (30 years) and mineralogical expert. He will be sorely missed!

2024 dues are due this month. \$15.00 for adults and \$7.50 for children ages: 6 -17.

---

## AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Because Brooks Britt was unable to attend the Holiday Party in December due to a conflicting engagement, we awarded him his Lifetime Membership at the January meeting.

Brooks has been a member since 1995 and he is our current Secretary. He was recently voted in for 2 more years in that position. However, many of you may be surprised to learn that he was also our TGMS President and Newsletter Editor for many years. Brooks' willingness to step back into the role as an officer and share his experience again is much appreciated! He also does a lot of behind the scenes work as our Facebook Administrator and our Website Webmaster. Additionally, Brooks has displayed several times his amazing mineral collections in the large display cases at the TOTE shows. We were very thankful for his presentation on Montana agates.



### **Club Dues for 2024 due.**

They are \$15 for Adults.  
\$7.50 for Children under 16,  
and Free for children 5 years  
and younger.

# Hear Ye, Hear Ye!

## 2024 Important Dates

*(Dates are subject to change or be cancelled)*

February 8 - 11	Tucson Gem Show (Main)
February 16	TGMS Meeting
March 15	TGMS Meeting
March 22	DATE CHANGE !! Spring TOTE Show - Set Up
March 23, 24, 25	DATE CHANGE !! Spring TOTE Show
March 15 - 17	Land of Sky Gem Show, Swannanoa, NC
April 19	TGMS Meeting
May 17	TGMS Meeting
May 31 - June 2	Pipsico Fossil Hunt
June 21	TGMS Meeting
July 19	TGMS Meeting
August 9 -12	Pipsico Fossil Hunt
August 16	TGMS Meeting
September 20	TGMS Meeting
October 18	TGMS Meeting
November 15	TGMS Meeting



---

## PROGRAM FOR FEBRUARY

### ROCKHOUNDING IN IDAHO, OREGON AND NEVADA



1. Graveyard Point
2. Succor Creek State Park
3. Coal Basin Road at Idaho/Oregon Border
4. Bruneau Wood Pile
5. McDermitt, Nevada Cinnabar Mine

The newsletter can also be found online: <http://tgms.weebly.com/>



# LOOK OUT FOR ROCK SNAKES!!!

By Judy Hyszcak

Last summer I came across a story about a community that started an outside art project. It was a growing trend in several Utah towns that gave children a fun, creative outlet while also bringing smiles to all who saw it. They're called rock snakes, and they were growing longer by the day!

In Riverton, Ernie the rock snake stretched for more than 65 feet along the intersection of Cervina and Chamonix Way. Tooele has one called Romeo at the Tooele Market Place, and the one in Draper, Rockwell was comprised of almost 600 colorful rocks along the Porter Rockwell Trail.

One little girl, named Liberty Sellers loved hiding treasures for people to find. She begged her parents to make a rock snake in Rockwell, Utah. When the project reached 100 rocks, Liberty was thrilled. And then it increased to 200... and then it grew to 300! With every milestone she was so excited. The Rockwell snake had reached 500 rocks in only 2.5. weeks.



Rockwell the Snake in its new home.

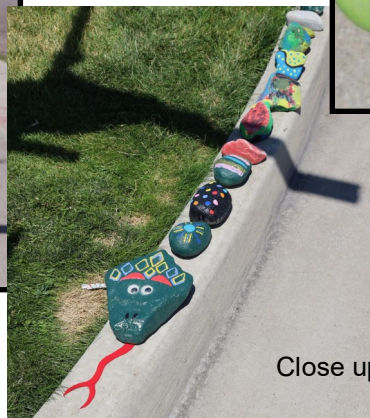
Unfortunately for Liberty, the snake was originally lined up along the Porter Rockwell Trail, but the city stopped the art installation a few weeks after it was begun. Draper officials said if they allowed the rock snake to stay, they'd have to allow everything anyone wanted to leave there.

While they were sad to remove the rock snake, Liberty and her family were determined to find another home for the snake. Four generations of the Sellers family got together one day and moved each and every rock about 30 feet off the public trail, onto an abandoned railroad track. They even went and cleaned debris and trash from the unused tracks to beautify the area. The snake continued to grow. Locals went out of their way to seek him out and add to the project. These strangers also helped to clean up the tracks.

This fascination with rocks began when Liberty and her family were living in Virginia a few years ago. They were in a park during Covid and found 'kindness rocks' in the park. It was really popular at that time where people would paint rocks and hide them in plain sight. Liberty was happy when she found a spotted rock, then she started painting rocks and hiding them all over. She thought it was the funniest thing when people found them, or sometimes she'd get too excited and randomly hand them to someone. Years ago I remember seeing rocks at the Norfolk Botanical Gardens and reading instructions somewhere to take a photo of the rock and then post it on a Facebook page.



Ernie, the rock snake in Riverton, UT. Notice how long he is in the picture?



Close up of the beginning of Ernie



Two special rocks



## Treasures of the Earth Gem, Mineral & Jewelry Show March 23, 24 and 25

The 2024 Treasures of the Earth (T.O.T.E.) shows are a great opportunity to get together with other TGMS members, visit, share your talents and learn more about minerals all while helping the club. Please consider volunteering...even just an hour will be a great help. All members who volunteer will be entered into a raffle drawing for a one-year subscription to the Rock and Gem magazine or a \$25.00 gift card if you already get that publication.

We need many members to help in order to make these shows successful. Here are a few examples of how you can help:

**Tables** - Volunteer at the tables to collect donations for specimens and the various bags that we offer. If you like working with kids, you can help at the kid station.

**Display Cases** - We need displays! We have several large wooden display cases and two small glass cases. Show off your collection or crafts!

**Lapidary Artists** - Lapidary demonstrators are always a big hit. You must have attended a workshop and have been cleared on the machines.

**Demonstrators** - Do you make gem trees, jewelry, chainmail or do any other rock or mineral related craft? We need demonstrators of various types to share their skills.

**Digital Microscope** - Emery Dixon's "*It's a Small, Small, Small World*" digital microscope demonstration was such a big hit at the October 2022 show. So, the club voted to buy a similar digital microscope. We need volunteers to run this demonstration.

**Fluorescent Display** - Our Fluorescent Specialist, Roger Blackman, will have his always popular demonstration. We need a few outgoing and friendly volunteers to assist him.

We need demonstrators. Share your talents! Do you do bead work or chainmail, paint rocks or make jewelry? Do you create gem trees? Are you a silversmith or lapidarist? Can you facet gems? We have a lot of spots available for demonstrators. All you must do is be willing to do what you love to do in public! Occasionally, you may get a question or two as people walk by.

Displays are very important too! Do you want to show off your personal collection or the products of your talent? This is your opportunity... we have one large and two small display cases that still need to be filled. If you want to help but are not sure how... call me...together, we'll come up with a few ideas.

If you can't help at the show, you can help pick up and transport from the storage locker & set up on Thursday March 22nd from 12:30 to 5:30...the more volunteers we have, the quicker it is. We also need people to pack up, clean up and transport to the storage locker on Sunday March 25th from 5:00pm to 6:00pm. Trucks and SUV's or vans are needed!

Please consider donating at least one hour to help the Society have a successful show. To volunteer, call Kelley Finch at (757) 630-6607 or use the sign-up sheet that will be available at the February 16th TGMS meeting.



Tidewater Gem & Mineral Society  
P.O. Box 61021  
Virginia Beach, Va. 23466-1021

### About This Publication

**The Tidewater Prospector** is the monthly newsletter of the Tidewater Gem and Mineral Society, Virginia Beach, Virginia, associated with the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc. and the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies. Permission to copy freely granted when proper credit given to both the publication and the author.

**The Tidewater Gem and Mineral Society** is a non-profit organization devoted to the collecting and study of minerals, gemstones, geology, paleontology and the lapidary arts as well as the love and deep appreciation of the great outdoors.

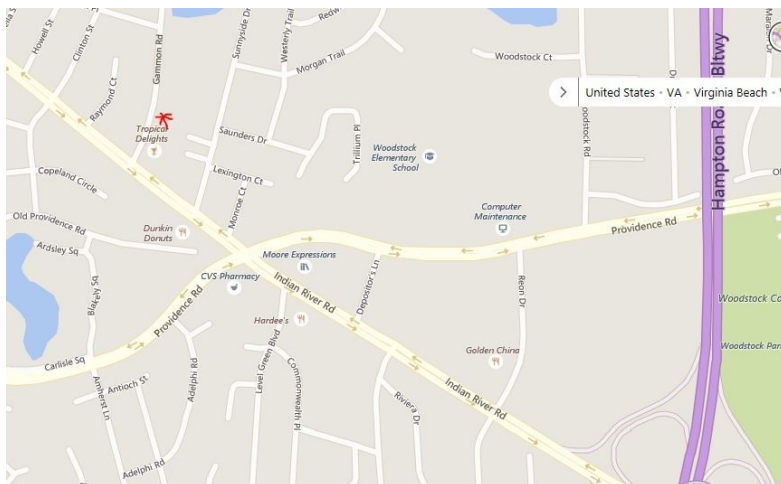
**Meetings** are the third Friday of each month at 7:30 PM at Memorial United Methodist Church located at 804 Gammon Road, Virginia Beach, VA. Our monthly meetings are open to everyone, no admission is charged.

**Website:** <http://tgms.weebly.com/>  
Please contact Brooks Britt with any photos that you would like to add to our site. Email him at: [bhbritt@verizon.net](mailto:bhbritt@verizon.net) You can also view this newsletter on the site.

Email [hyszczak@cox.net](mailto:hyszczak@cox.net) to submit articles to the newsletter editor. Deadline is third of the month for material for the newsletter - but the sooner, the better!

**Facebook:** <http://www.facebook.com> Login to FB, then go to Groups and in the search box, type in "Tidewater Gem & Mineral Society". The page is open to view by anyone. Click "join" to join the group to add photos of your own and to post information. Brooks administers the site and will get back with you.

**FAIR USE NOTICE:** This publication may contain copyrighted material the use of which has not been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in our efforts to advance the educational understanding of the amateur jewelry fabrication and rock collecting hobbies. We believe this constitutes a 'fair use' of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the U.S. Copyright Law. If you wish to use material from this publication for commercial or purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.



Our meeting in will be on  
February 16th at 7:30 pm at  
Memorial United Methodist Church,  
804 Gammon Road, Virginia Beach, VA.  
(Gammon Road is off of Indian River Road,  
between Military Highway and Providence Road)

