The Rostrum
The Newsletter of the Maryland Geological Society
Baltimore, Maryland

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The upcoming meeting will be action packed! I am going to keep the business and reports to a minimum to give as much time as possible to the 10th Anniversary party discussion and for our special guest speaker, Dr. Robert Weems.

The anniversary committee has prepared a list of possibilities for our special event. Now they need your input. It is important to make some decisions now so preparations and reservations can be made in time. If you cannot attend please mail the form found on page 23 by March 16.

At last, Part 2 of the Muddy Creek program will be the highlight of our meeting. Dr. Weems will speak about the reptile and fish fossils from the Fisher site. Don’t forget to bring your Muddy Creek (Fisher site) material to the meeting.

This will be John’s last Rostrum as editor. This position needs to be filled by someone who likes to be in the middle of the information stream and wants to put their computer to good use. The editor does not put together each issue alone. Please contact John or me and get the details. The next Rostrum goes out in 2 months.

Good Collecting,
Mel

MGS meetings are held bimonthly, beginning in January of each year. Meeting dates are to be announced in The Rostrum, since the meeting hall can only be contracted two months in advance. Meetings begin promptly at 12:00 P.M. on the date specified. Meetings take place at the Bowie Community Center, located adjacent to the shopping mall at the intersection of Rt. 450 & Stony Brook Drive, Bowie, MD.

Meeting: The next MGS meeting will be held on Sunday, March 18, 2001 beginning at 12:00 a.m. (doors open at 11:00 a.m.) at the Bowie Community Center.

Program: Dr. Robert Weems "Muddy Creek Fossils."

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MGS 10th Anniversary – Update
by John Redick

As stated in our last issue of The Rostrum, November of 2001 marks MGS’s 10th year together as a club for mineral and fossil enthusiasts. The anniversary committee formed by President Mel Hurd has been hard at work. On February 2, 2001, Mel met with the committee members in Bowie MD (Rips Restaurant) to discuss the possibilities most likely to make this special celebration of ours an event for all to enjoy.

Discussion topics ranged from types of facilities (restaurants, cruise, picnic venue), types of dress (casual attire or black tie & hip waders!), music, locations best suited for our membership, time of the year and even possible menu preferences. A nostalgic look back our to our early years is an important theme for our celebration. We plan on having a complimentary issue of the very first Rostrum (Volume 1, #1), as prepared by our first editor, Dick Grier, Jr., available to those who attend our celebration. We also plan on printing stories from the membership as to what propelled
us, as individuals, into our collecting hobby.

This is where we need your help...

We request that you write down your fond memories of your early days as a collector. What lit the fire for you? Tell us some of your greatest moments and successes as a collector. Feel free to include that funny story if you have one. Pictures that you may have of yourself and others (or finds) are greatly encouraged. Of course, any pictures will be copied and returned to you. We hope that you can limit your remarks to half of a typed page. Submissions longer than half of a typed page will be subject to editing. If you have any questions concerning the writing of your story, please contact Eric Beach at <ericnbeach@cs.com> or call him at 202-387-1710.

The next regular meeting of the MGS, scheduled for March 18, 2001, will provide ample time dedicated at discovering the type of celebration that you would like to have for our 10th anniversary party. Please come to the next meeting with thoughts as to the type of event you would like to have. This is a very important question we need to answer because all other logistical elements for our party will flow from this key decision.

See anniversary survey on page 23

The MGS Will Visit LEE CREEK in Spring 2001

By Dick Grier, Jr.

Mr. Curtis Ormond, the new Public Relations Officer for PCS, Inc., has informed Mel Hurd that the MGS has been given 70 seats for Saturday, April 14, 2001 as fossil collecting has finally been resumed. Under the new system proposed by Mr. Ormond, accepting a seat with the MGS, or any other club this season, will constitute stating a preference for that club. Since each collector is now allowed to go in only once per season, once his preference has been established, he must go in with that same club each season (he cannot change preference next season in order to obtain a better date). Mr. Ormond plans to rotate the different clubs (in order, each season) so that eventually, each club will be the first to collect in the mine. We realize that a substantial number of our members may wish to indicate a preference this season with a club other than the MGS. The mine will be closed to collecting during May and the last week of April (5 weeks) this Spring, so our date works out to be the next to the last weekend of the season.

The MGS call-in for this trip will be held on Wednesday, April 4, 2001 from 6-9pm EST, and will be handled by Dick Grier, Sr., at (410) 285-5554. As in previous years, the club officers, committee chairman and committee members will be given reserved seats for the trip, After they call-in to either confirm or cancel ON THE CALL-IN NIGHT. Continuing members had until January 31, 2001 to renew their memberships to preserve their eligibility. If their dues were not received by that date, they will be placed on the alternate list in order as they call-in. Members who joined the MGS after the cutoff date, January 21, 2001, will also be placed on the alternate list when they call-in. After the call-in, the officers who did not confirm or cancel will be removed from the list and any available (remaining) seats will be filled in order from the alternate list. Seats that are unfilled may need to be returned to PCS. Our 3 European members will be permitted to email their requests for a seat during the hours of the call-in, if they are interested (they are responsible for computing the time differential with respect to Eastern Standard Time).

Mr. Ormond informed us that each collector seeking to gain access must present a valid photo ID, in
addition to signing the required waivers for PCS. The information that you provide will be placed on a spreadsheet for control purposes. There will be no carrying of flares this year. Otherwise the rules will be much the same as before. I assume that Becky & Frank Hyne will be leading the trips, as usual. I suggest that you plan to arrive at the PCS parking lot no later than 7am the morning of the trip. This should allow ample time for preparation. It will be necessary that each of us follow the rules of the mine explicitly, because if there are any infractions, we may all be permanently expelled. The mine’s rules appeal to our common sense, and if you think SAFETY, you won’t have any problem. Frank & Becky are in charge in these matters. You will be in the mine from 9am-3pm, and you will not be able to return to your automobile until after 3pm. So dress warmly, bring enough liquid to drink, and you may wish to bring a small lunch. PCS usually supplies hard hats, but if you prefer to bring your own, the color CANNOT be white. When the school bus drops us off at the mine, remember the location of the bus. You must return to the bus BEFORE 3pm to exit. No excuses for lateness. There will probably be a Spot-a-Pot available for your convenience at the point of disembarkation. Let’s begin our 10th anniversary year with an enjoyable yet safe trip to Lee Creek. I look forward to collecting with all of you. See you in April!

Members Finds
and items displayed at the January 21 MGS meeting
by Phil Schmitz

Daryl Serafin brought a 2" Crocodile scute and quite a few Porpoise teeth, a nice seal tooth and a Phyllopus mouth plate all from Brownies Beach. Eric Woody brought some Muddy Creek material. Dick Grier, Jr. brought a nice collection of Megalodon, some Isurus xiphodon, and other Isurus species teeth from the Calvert, Choptank and St. Mary’s Formation in Md. Terry Cirrincione brought a display of Saber-shaped teeth of Carcharodontosaurus saharicus (a Cretaceous dinosaur) that were discovered by Dr. Paul Sereno of the University of Chicago. Terry won the 1st place trophy at the Eastern Federation at Harrisburg, PA. Terry scored a perfect score of 100 in the master group. Eric Seifert brought many three and four ribbed Echphora from Beaufort Co, NC; Cross, SC; St. Mary’s, MD; and Plum Point, Md. He has collected these Echphora over the past eleven years. Charles Shyab brought a 2d edition of Charles Darwin Origin of Species. John Redick brought a seal jaw - Leptophoca lenis (lower left position). He found it in an unnamed stream near the Willows. Rick Smith brought two Oxytropidoceras sp. (Ammonites) that he collected from the Goodland limestone (Albian age) from Justin, Texas (north of Ft. Worth). Mike and Tina Bickerstaff brought a nice selection of Ammonites and Hematites from their collecting trip in England. Phil Schmitz brought a 1/4" Hexanchus symphyseal from Muddy Creek. He also brought a brachiopod and some Fluorite and Galena he collected in New Mexico in Sep 2000.

Brief review of the program presented by Tina and Mike Bickerstaff at the January 21 MGS meeting:

Mike and Tina Bickerstaff presented slides of their trip to England where they collected over 300 pounds of Ammonites and Hematite. The collecting area was extremely muddy as they had to pull their children out of the mud several times. They had no problem collecting wherever they wanted, however, parking was limited and they had some hiking to do to get to their collecting sites. Tina Bickerstaff is a professional geologist.
Thank You

Don Miller for donating a deer astralagus and calcaneus; Bob Farrar for donating 16 mineral specimens and extra labels; Jim Savia for donating 7 bags of polished agates; Mark Bennett for his donation of fossils: teeth, amber, atlas vertebra, Ecphora and oyster shell; Phil Schmitz for donating a mammoth tooth, 3 echinoids, an ammonite, a bag of Turritella plus Muddy Creek ray teeth & vertebrae; Jim Forrest and Julianne Rael for their generous cash donation to MGS; Terry Cirrincione for bringing her award winning display of Saber-shaped teeth of Carcharodontosaurus saharicus (a Cretaceous dinosaur); Pam and Bob Platt for donating a box of assorted rocks and minerals; Les Heinzl for donating 3 Mercenaria (clam-both valves) and the treats he brought to the MGS Holiday party; Flo and Bernie Stream for donating 2 Exogyra costata, Costaglycymeris virginiae, a small bag of Turritella alticostata and a bag of Belemnitella americana; Al Pribula for donating some unused postage stamps; Tom Caggiano for his generous cash donation to MGS and Richard E. Shannahon, Jr. for his generous cash donation to MGS.

Minutes of the November MGS Meeting

The regular bimonthly meeting of the Maryland Geological Society was held on November 5, 2000 at the Bowie Community Center in Bowie, Maryland, with the AFF as our guests. The meeting was called to order by MGS President Mel Hurd, who welcomed guests and new members. There were 58 adults and 6 junior members and 6 guests present. The minutes of the previous meeting were read. The treasurer’s report was not ready.

Membership chairman Dick Grier, Sr. announced that as of November 4 we have 242 members, including 177 adults and 65 juniors, with seven new members since September 16, plus seven honorary and three life members.

Charlie Noye has been successful in arranging for several field trips: Boren Clay Mine, a Triassic site in Gulf, NC, will be on December 9. Permission slips are available. Trips have been taken to Red Hill and St. Claire. We are hoping to get into Scientist’s Cliffs in the spring. Information will soon be available for Medford Quarry.

John Redick suggested members continually check the club web site for updates on upcoming programs of all kinds. If you have something to publish, send an e-mail to Mike Skipper at mskipper@glue.umd.edu. Dino-fest is being held in Chicago this year, from December 1 to January 7. We are invited to the AFF meeting an December 19, at Pimmit Hills. The speaker will be George Loud, who will present a program on the history of laws governing the collecting of fossils and artifacts on government land.

Annual elections were held, with the following results: President-Mel Hurd, Vice President-Eric Seifter, Treasurer-Mike Folmer, and Secretary-Barb Ermler.

Annual awards were announced. The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Bob Grier, one of the founders of the club. The Literary Awards went to Rick Smith and Phil Schmitz, who will receive free membership for the coming year. Mel brought up the idea of establishing a President’s Award, to be conferred at the discretion of the president. The idea was discussed and approved.
Other honors received by members include the following: At EFMLS, Terry Cirrincione received her Masters Certificate, George Powell won two blue ribbons and a trophy in the open category and John Redick won second prize as new editor of the Rostrum.

Plans continue for the MGS 10th anniversary celebration. A committee has been formed to discuss and coordinate plans for our party. Eric Woody, Diane Reinecke, Arlene Gemitter and Kathy Haberny are working along with club officers. Dick Grier, Jr. is writing the club history and has retrieved copies of all the charter year's Rostrums.

Announcements included the following: We have won the first round in the fight for Douglas Point. See Terry or Phil for a list of e-mail addresses. The National Zoo wants a fossil display in its Discovery Room. George Powell will get back to us on this. Frank Hyne has had knee replacement surgery. Things are looking up for spring trips into Lee Creek.

Secretary, Barbara Ermler

Minutes of the January Meeting

The regular bimonthly meeting of the Maryland Geological Society was held on January 21, 2001 at the Bowie Community Center in Bowie, Maryland. The meeting was called to order by MGS President Mel Hurd, who welcomed guests and new members. There were 49 adults, 5 junior members and 5 guests present. No minutes were read.

The treasurer's report was given by Mel Hurd. As of January 1, we have $2,033.94 in checking and $3,094.73 in savings, for a total in the treasury of $5,128.67.

Membership chairman Dick Grier, Sr. announced that as of January 20 we have 171 members, including 128 adults and 43 juniors, with 27 new members since November 4, plus seven honorary and 4 life members. He reminded us that the $15 dues are payable now, and that those who are not paid up by January 31 are dropped from the membership roster.

Dick Grier, Jr. spoke further on membership requirements. Release forms have to be signed at each field trip. He suggested we do this at the time of dues payment each year. This suggestion was adopted by vote.

Charlie Noye was not present, but assistant field trip chairman Dave Anderson reported on upcoming local trips. These include Liverpool Point on March 10, with a March 5 call-in, and a May 12 trip to Popes Creek.

John Redick announced he could put a copy of the standard release form in the next newsletter. He also announced he needs to vacate the position as editor of the Rostrum.

We are cautiously optimistic about the Nanjemoy property. Pepco is the present owner. Maryland Rock is buying the property, but that deal is on hold due to an appeal. The Conservation Fund is also trying to buy it.
Web site editor Mike Skipper needs pictures and other material for the club web site. He wants to add information about our Tenth Anniversary activities.

The biggest news is the opening of Lee Creek. Curtis Ormond has finally granted MGS only 70 seats. We have asked to be notified if more places open up. He has a database set up to ensure that each person goes in only once per season. (There are two seasons per year - fall and spring.)

Our date is April 14th. Call-in is April 4, from 6:00 to 9:00 to Dick Grier, Sr. There was a discussion over whether to use a sign-up sheet at meetings rather than the call-in process. The decision was to leave things as they are for the present. Officers still have protected seats as long as they have called-in. Members who have paid their dues by January 16 will be on the first list, other that pay later will be on the alternate list.

A picture ID as well as a helmet will be required at the site, as well as a helmet, which may not be white. Some new motels have opened up in the area near Lee Creek, and Highway 64 now goes all the way to 17. Check the MGS web site and the newsletter for more information.

Secretary, Barbara Ermler

Arbutus is a small suburban community of Baltimore County a short distance southwest of Baltimore City near the intersection of Interstates 95 and 695. Several members of the community are compiling a history of the area which will be published and I was asked to contribute a short article about a portion of the prehistory of Arbutus which appears below.

Arbutus – 110 Million Years Ago
By J. Richard Smith (alias Rick Smith)

Portions of the prehistory of Arbutus can be found recorded in the rocks and clays that the community of Arbutus has literally been built on top of. Much of the clay, sand, and rocks that are found in the Arbutus area are part of a set of geological formations that are collectively referred to as the Potomac Group. This material dates back to a time period of approximately 110 million years ago. Geologically, this period in time is part of the early Cretaceous period. The Cretaceous is the youngest of the three periods that make up the Mesozoic Era, often referred to as the “Age of Dinosaurs”. Fossilized remains of these early inhabitants of Arbutus have on rare occasion been uncovered along with abundant plant fossils from the same time period. Notable dinosaur discoveries from Arbutus include portions of a femur (leg bone) from the Maryland state dinosaur Astrodon johnstoni. In the summer of 1989, Bob Eberle, an amateur paleontologist, uncovered a portion of femur that was subsequently donated to the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. [1]. In November of 1998 the author, an Arbutus resident and also an amateur paleontologist, discovered part of a femur embedded within an iron concretion while searching in the same general vicinity as the earlier find [2,3]. This specimen was placed on display at the Maryland Science Center in Baltimore in 1999 as part of a “Dinosaurs of Maryland” exhibit [4].

The Arbutus landscape provides a window into what life on the land was like here over 100 million years ago since our present environment has changed dramatically from the time when dinosaurs
were the most notable inhabitants of the area. Broad lowland plains bisected by numerous rivers characterized much of the eastern coast of the United States. The Arbutus landscape probably resembled the Mississippi Delta region of present day, but with a much different flora. The lush vegetation included ferns, conifers, cycads, ginkgoes, club mosses, and horsetails. Of particular importance during this time was the emergence of the first angiosperms (flowering plants) [5,6]. Numerous fossilized plant remains from the early Cretaceous period have been found in Arbutus by the author. These include the cones from sequoia trees that once towered over the landscape, indeterminate plant impressions preserved in ironstone, and an abundance of lignitized wood. Fossilized cycads have also been reported from Arbutus [7]. The animal life of our area 100 million years ago was also quite different than present day. As noted previously, fossilized remains of the dinosaur *Astrodon johnstoni* have been discovered in Arbutus. Other evidence of dinosaurs from this region comes from an area once referred to as “Dinosaur Alley”, which parallels the present day I-95 corridor from northern Virginia into Baltimore County, MD. This corridor provides the only known record of North American dinosaurs from this time period (early Cretaceous) east of the Mississippi. Evidence of dinosaurs from “Dinosaur Alley” include fossilized teeth and bone fragments of *Astrodon johnstoni*, small and large carnivorous theropods including “Capitosaurus” from Washington, D.C., and the teeth of *Priconodon crassus*, an ankylosaur. Fossilized remains of crocodiles, turtles, fish, clams, and snails have also been uncovered [5,6,8].

Arbutus is located near the Fall Line, the area of coastal rivers where rapids prevented further passage up river by large boats or ships. Many of the larger cities on the eastern coast were built along the Fall Line. It is the area where the hard, crystalline rocks of the Piedmont Plateau meet up with the Coastal Plain clay and sand. The Arbutus area provides a cross section of the early Cretaceous deposits of the Coastal Plain. Minerals that can be found in the area include limonite replacing wood, hematite, goethite, siderite, magnetite, kaolinite, marcasite, melanterite, turgite, and quartz pebbles [9]. It was during the early Cretaceous period that sedimentary iron ore, often referred to as “bog iron”, was formed through a process whereby bacteria were able to precipitate iron and manganese out of the water [10]. The iron ore that was formed often encased plants, dinosaur bones and teeth, shells, and other materials. Recent discoveries have even found the footprints of several types of dinosaurs preserved in the iron ore. After millions of years of entombment beneath the topsoil, natural erosion processes and human activities have brought some of this material to the surface.

The iron ore that can still be found in the Arbutus area once had a much different importance than acting as an indicator of where to hunt for dinosaurs. During a voyage up the Patapsco River in 1608, Captain John Smith discovered the presence of iron ore, the first record of such in Maryland [11]. The first noteworthy smelting operations of the ore were not recorded though until approximately 1720 in Cecil County, Maryland. The iron ore was extensively mined throughout much of central Maryland, much of it coming from small pits on local farms. Arbutus, Halethorpe, and Lansdowne had a number of small iron ore mines that are listed in the historical record [11]. The ore masses could be larger than an automobile and were generally broken up into smaller pieces and carted off to a number of local iron furnaces. In nearby Elkridge, an iron furnace and forge were erected prior to 1759. In 1826 Andrew Ellicott, Jr. and his brothers rebuilt a furnace and forge on the same site. It was an active industry with an annual output of 1400 tons and employed 100 hands. It was rebuilt again in 1854, but abandoned in 1872. The Avalon Iron Works were built in 1800 on the Patapsco River near Relay. A flood of the river valley in 1868 destroyed the mills and they were never rebuilt. From early colonial times and through much of the 1800's, the area supported a very active mining industry. By 1905, only a single active iron furnace remained in central Maryland and imported materials dominated the market.
While the commercial importance of the iron ore of Arbutus and central Maryland has disappeared, the geological formations still provide an opportunity to look for fossilized remains from the time of the dinosaurs. Individuals interested in dinosaur hunting should search for outcroppings of a layer of material known as Arundel clay. The clay is characterized by a blue-gray color, contains abundant lignite, which resembles charcoal or burnt wood, and also contains sedimentary iron ore. The material occurs in a belt about 5-8 km wide from Cecil County, through Washington, D.C., and extends into Virginia. The belt follows the Fall Line, roughly following Interstate-95, US Route 1, and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. While the majority of dinosaur discoveries occurred in the 1800’s when mining activities were at their peak, significant discoveries are still waiting to be made by the modern day dinosaur hunter.

References


My Story of Lee Creek Mine.
By Eric J. Woody

I began my journey to Lee creek mine during my visits to the Naturalist Center at the Smithsonian’s Natural History Museum in 1992. It was a journey of discovery and dreams. I first heard about the Lee Creek mine from one of the docents there: She told me that Lee Creek (Phosphate Company of Saskatchewan) was very popular with fossil hunters and professional paleontologists. I’d been collecting fossils since 1988 on several beaches but mostly at Flag Ponds Nature Park in Calvert County, Md. Lee Creek became a goal as I had heard this mine was a place where dreams could come true. It was spring or summer of 1993 when George Powell did a display at Flag Ponds Nature Park as part of their fossil exhibit and identification day. His display included a photo album of his paratomus discovery. Energized by this display, I asked George how I could get to Lee Creek. George and the museum docents advised me that the best way to get into Lee Creek would be through a fossil club. Therefore I joined the Calvert Marine Museum club in the fall of 1993 and put in my bid for a trip into this world famous fossil site. I had joined Calvert too late to attend the fall 1993 collecting trip. Even spring 1994 was booked up solid! I was forced to wait a little over a year before I finally had my chance to discover the Lee Creek experience.

The stories I’ve heard about Lee Creek’s legendary temperature extremes were true but on my first trip the temperatures were manageable. It was a bright sunny fall day, with a parking lot full of excited happy people. We all introduced ourselves as we gathered waiting for the bus and huddling with our club members. I met Frank and Becky Hyne (PCS staff) for the first time as they gathered the groups of clubs to hand out the sign-up sheets with rules. It was an exciting prospect to finally go into the pit for the first time. It was time to go into the mine as everyone jockeyed for position to board the bus. All of us were talking about what we wanted to accomplish on the trip and how we would achieve it. The bus finally made its way out of the parking lot and into the mine. It was a long ride full of anticipation and promise, but we were ready for anything. I had brought my backpack, water, snacks plus containers to store fossils in. We were instructed to observe all mine rules and to stay within the boundary lines that marked our collecting area. The days of wandering anywhere you want in Lee Creek are gone, as many areas are potentially dangerous to the collector so the mine has enacted stricter rules in the name of public safety for its mine guests.

As I filed off the bus with the others and looked out at the endless elongated hillsides that lay in front of us I was amazed by the size of this place and excited at the prospect of finding the fossils that I had dreamed about for so long. I fanned out and took it all in before heading out to a specific spot. There were fossils everywhere I stepped and the corals were most impressive by their size and availability. I picked up as many as I could carry but was reminded by another collector that shark teeth were the main objective here and should be sought after first. I decided to walk over to one of the large spoil piles in the back of the mine. It was very elongated with steep slopes and had great possibilities. Walking towards this pile found me stopping a few times to ponder whether I should collect where I was or take a chance on that large distant pile with the daunting slopes. This happens to most collectors at Lee Creek because the fossil material actually litters the place and you’re concerned about walking past great specimens. There have been many stories of huge teeth, fully exposed, being found with footprints all around them!

Well, I finally made it to this huge man-made hill and was afraid of heights until I climbed to the top and found that it was quite flat and wide. It extended for a very long distance with other smaller little hills and valleys that contained thousands of fossils.
I saw dozens of whale and porpoise vertebrae everywhere with some being too large and numerous to carry back to the bus so I was forced to leave many of them where I found them. I was one of three or four on this particular hill so everyone had plenty of room and we hardly ever came in contact with another collector. It was a tooth collector’s dream. There was one scientist on this hill that collected dozens of fish jaws which I wasn’t particularly interested in but enjoyed inspecting them out of curiosity. I also found another collector who had dozens of pieces of shark cartilage, which were there for the taking. At the time I did not think they would be so rare as I would later discover to be the case. I continued to collect dozens of teeth: Makos, tiger shark, sand shark, hemipristis, and lemon shark. Some of them stood on their own pedestals. Pedestals are formed by the fossil acting as a rain shield that prevents the sediment directly underneath of it from washing away. The surrounding material washing away results with the fossil sitting on its own little earthen mound that can be several inches higher than the surrounding surface.

It was quite a site to see but worth the effort to join a club and become a part of this legendary Lee creek mine history. I left the mine and boarded the bus knowing the day was successful and that I would be back for another adventure. In the parking lot many people gathered to take photos and share the days fossil finds. I've since gone back to Lee Creek season after season with many trips being adventures in the rain, cold, wind, and of course, the oppressive heat. I’ve also collected on later trips the much sought after Characorcles megalodon and fossils such as seal teeth, seal bones, bird material, fish dentaries, coprolites, whale material, fossil shells, crab claws and other fossils. I will return no matter what the conditions are because the prospect of discovery is so strong that it will always draw you back down the road to the Lee Creek mine.

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**Book Review**

**Great Ideas Hatch Out**

Eggs, Nests, and Baby Dinosaurs by Kenneth Carpenter
Indiana University Press 1999, $37 in hardback
Reviewed by Timothy P. Price

Ever wonder where you could find a nice Early Cretaceous dinosaur egg when you find yourself in Thailand? Have I got a book for you. The title of the book is a little misleading. Although the main thrust of the book is indicated by the title, nearly any topic that relates to dinosaurs is covered in this book. The book is truly comprehensive in scope, and accessible if you are willing to wade through the sheer volume of it. A lot of information about fossil eggs and nests of other vertebrate groups is at least touched on, which yields a book that has a wealth of information that may well prove useful to those of us with the resources to acquire fossil eggs. Although I think the author meant for this book to be read by a wider market, it’s detail and scope limits it’s audience to individuals that bring a strong background in the subject matter with them. The author goes as far as to recommend books on the general topic of dinosaurs that one might want to read before tackling his offering.

For a book with credentials like this one, you wouldn’t expect much humor, but you would be wrong. One of my favorite gags is in a section on the expense of courtship behavior, where he suggests dinner, flowers and a movie are a good place to start. The problem is that the liberal sprinkling of humor seems to lead to an uneven consistency in the text. You really don’t expect a twisted joke in the middle of a discussion about the different types of fossil eggs and their worldwide distribution. I suspect that the author is well aware of the potential for this material to intimidate the reader, and is trying to soften the blow before a heavy dose of jargon.
Scientists often have a condescending attitude toward popular consumption writing, yet this book contains a wealth of thesis ideas just thrown away, whereas these ideas are generally golden to those seeking one. Several of these ideas may end up producing research that will be of value to us interested amateurs in the future (I'd say more, but I need to get to work on a proposal). This is a substantial book, with just about everything you want to know on the subject of dinosaur development. This book might be better viewed as a reference book, although some may want to tackle it in a more leisurely fashion.

On a related note, if you haven't seen it on the discount rack yet, hunt down a copy of "The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Dinosaurs" by Dr. David Norman and Dr. Peter Wellnhofer from Salamander Books. For about $10 you’ll get nearly 400 pages with 1,300 illustrations. I'm not sure why a book with a copyright date of 2000 should have already found its way to the remainder rack, but I don't argue with a deal. The brief skimming I have been able to give this book, it seems both readable and authoritative. At first glance this book could easily be mistaken for a children's book, but you would be sorely mistaken.

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**Book Review**

**Crunchy on the Outside...**

Trilobite! Eyewitness to Evolution. by Richard Fortey

Alfred A. Knopf 2000, $26 in hardback

Reviewed by Timothy P. Price

Most of you have probably already heard about this much-heralded book. Excerpted in Natural History magazine, the subject matter is near and dear to paleontologists worldwide. For those of us who look to the sandy deposits of the tertiary in the Atlantic Coastal Plain and the Piedmont, these fossils will be as unfamiliar as if they were found on Mars. For the rest of us fortunate enough to have grown up in the hilly regions just to the north and west, trilobites are the treasure that we spent countless hours cracking cold, unyielding shale and limestone in endless search of. This is not a pursuit unique to northeastern Americans, as the British author makes infinitely clear from the start.

This book is an odd mixture of literary references, obscure allusions, and reference to scientific figures from previous centuries that only a select few will be familiar with. In the early going, a reader may have trouble with what is surely a European affectation, and the odd turns of phrase. But a transplanted Pennsylvanian like myself can't help but think back to his first finds when names like Phacops, Triarthus, and Olenellus pop up like old friends, and find himself swept along. For those who want to make some new acquaintances, there are plenty of new Latin words to try to familiarize yourself with. Don't worry, the author isn't intent on impressing you with his vocabulary. There are even a few new friends who can't be properly introduced because no one knows their name yet. If you're more interested in anatomical research, there is plenty of it here, since the eyes are one of the most notorious features of this group. There is enough history of trilobite studies to give you a good primer on the subject. Learn this information, and you'll be able to fit right in at a convention of trilobite specialists. If you can find one.

This is not a massive book. The relative brevity or the text will keep it from intimidating too many who are interested in the subject matter. Personally, I skipped the chapter on eyes. It seemed to me that it was tacked on, as a pet project of the author. The book serves both as a nice primer for the
trilobite neophyte, and also enriches those who are familiar with extinct arthropods. There is little here that will help you find or identify trilobites, but the information found within it is accessible, and should help everyone become a little more appreciative of the trilobites.

Thanks again. If you need to use both of these in the next issue, go right ahead. I'll be finishing up the current book on amber, and these reviews give me an excuse to spend money on books I want anyhow. Feel free to use them over two different issues if need be.

In Remembrance of Howard Binkley
by Cathy Gaber
Reprinted from The Dopstick (January 2001, Volume LII, # 1)

Many of you may remember Howard as the EFMLS President who presided over the federation meeting and hosted a reception for federation and club officers during our club show in 1999. He was a dedicated rockhound and a good friend.

I probably first encountered him as the editor of his club bulletin, the Mid Georgia Gem Clips, for which he won several BEAC awards. It was clear he had a good sense of humor and was a real Southern gentleman. Over the years, at the Eastern and American Federation meetings (he served one year as the 3rd vp for AFMS) and at Wildacres sessions, we got to know Howard and his dear wife LaVerne. Howard and I also had a regular e-mail communication. Among other things, we shared an interest in the soap opera As the World Turns. For those of you who understand, my last e-mail to him was entitled, Lily vs. Rose.

On the occasion of his 80th birthday several months ago, he was thrilled with the big family party. He sent me a list of his presents. Chocolate Bars and gift certificates for Home Depot were the most plentiful. He figured LaVerne had put the word out for some home repairs she wanted done. He was still chopping his own wood and was well able to maintain their property.

At the time of his death, Howard still had club and federation responsibilities. He had just assumed the title of Region VI advisor and was on the Past Presidents' Advisory Council. He had already found his own successor as editor for S.C.R.I.B.E., the national organization for bulletin editors. As far as I know, he was still planning to continue his club bulletin. He was inducted into the Bulletin Editors Hall of Fame a few years ago.

In addition to all he did for the hobby, Howard was retired from civil service at Robins Air Force Base and was active in amateur radio since the early 1940's. At one time, he was the Georgia State director of the MARS (Military Affiliated Radio Service). He was also a member and deacon of the Lebanon Baptist Church. His family life included 2 children, 8 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren.

Howard died rather unexpectedly on December 14th after a couple of weeks of relatively minor health complaints. His vision had become so bad in the last few months that blindness seemed like a real possibility, but never death. He will be truly missed.

Try to attend the March Meeting. You'll be glad you did!
Region IV Swap and Picnic
by Terry Cirrincione

The annual EFMLS Region IV Swap and Picnic has been planned for June 9, 2001, at Lake Anna State Park. This get-together has been going on for years. It's a place to swap tales, treasures, and renew acquaintances. No sales or exchange of money are allowed at the state park – just the swapping. There are always beautiful specimens for trade if you have the right material. Fossils and minerals are usually the trade items.

There is also a Treasure Box filled with material that members of Region IV clubs no longer want. So come and explore the Treasure Box and go home with some goodies. Not only do you look and find, but you also have the opportunity to get rid of some specimens you no longer want or just want to give away. Just add them to the Treasure Box and make someone happy.

Everyone is asked to bring something, whether it is cookies, brownies, paper plates, cups, mustard, pickles, chili, cole slaw, salads, dips and veggies, or anything else. You may bring whatever you would like and share with everyone. Later on closer to June 9, there will be a list of items that will definitely be needed. Everyone in Region IV clubs is invited. Someone will be the winner of the open door prize.
(There are no doors, just picnic areas and a barbecue grill.)

Last year, our MGS Annual Picnic conflicted with the Region IV Swap and Picnic. Let's hope it doesn't conflict this year. We cannot be in two places at one time.

Directions: Take 495 (Washington Beltway) to Interstate 95 south until you reach Route 118 at Thornburg Virginia. Take Route 606 west. 606 west turns into Route 208. Proceed on Route 208 for approximately 15 miles. Turn right onto Route 601. Then turn left into the Lake Anna State Park. Approximate distance from Washington, DC is 105 miles.
For more information, please call 540-854-5503.

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MGS and EFMLS Convention in Harrisburg - 2000
by Terry Cirrincione

The members of the Central Pennsylvania Rock and Mineral Club hosted the Eastern Federation for its 50th Anniversary at their show and convention in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania for the weekend of September 15 – 17, 2000. Two members of the Maryland Geological Society, George Powell and Terry Cirrincione attended both as representatives at the Board of Directors meeting and as participants of the show and convention. It is very important that the president or his delegate and the EFMLS liaison of each club attend because it is your right and your privilege and there are major issues to discuss and vote upon which affect each club. Many times there are important handouts given to each club as well as meeting the officers of your parent organization. These are the people who direct policy that affect your club. Think about it.

There were no major issues voted on at this year's meeting except for the budget and the new officers for 2001. Joy Bourne will now be serving her full year as EFMLS president even though she served most of the previous year when Reivan Zeleznik resigned due to personal family needs.
Statistics were announced during the meeting. 50 clubs were represented at the meeting. EFMLS has lost several clubs and now has 146 clubs in its federation; 0 clubs participated in the All-American Club Award; 32 clubs participated in the Bulletin Editors Contest; 6 clubs participated in the Each One Teach One Award; 25 members (mostly Central Pennsylvania club members) entered cases: 20 noncompetitive and 5 competitive; several new committees have been added to the Board; plus other announcements were made. Reports were given by each chairman present even though most of the reports were in written form and were presented to each of the voting members. Terry Cirrincione, Chairman of EFMLS Convention Advisory, announced from the podium that EFMLS does not have any host clubs scheduled for 2002, 2003 and 2004 as of this writing.

The show (exhibits) was held at the Zembo Temple. There were over 20 dealers at the show who had quite a variety of finished gems, polished stones, rough material, fossils, beads, and many supplies. It was delightful and varied. . . a meeting of many dealers one had dealt with for many years as well as new dealers. The EFMLS auction was held on the stage behind the main curtains; from the generous donations of material to the very generous offerings, EFMLS did fairly well.

The “Cracker Barrel” session lasted several hours. Discussion zeroed in on how to get members to participate in meetings, how to get and keep members in your club, and how to inspire members to volunteer for the many tasks necessary to keep the club functioning. A new committee, Club Advisory, has been formed to help clubs in EFMLS gain and keep more members. One question raised by member David Fenstemacher was (paraphrasing), ‘Since we have many fossil clubs as members of EFMLS, why don’t we consider adding the FOSSIL to the name?’ It was a good question. No one replied because it has been discussed before. People want to keep the name Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies mainly because it was originally founded for minerals and lapidary arts by mineralogists and lapidarists. Several clubs have discussed this for years, but I fear there would be a major upheaval to try to change the name. (Did anyone ever consider having an American Federation of Fossil Societies?)

George Powell and Terry Cirrincione had competitive exhibits for which both won two blue ribbons and trophies – George, 1st Place and Trophy, 95 points in the Novice Class for his 18-foot exhibit of Special Vertebrates, and Terry, 1st Place and Trophy, 100 points in the Master Class for Educational for a General Audience with her case of Carcharodontosaurus saharicus. Both were extremely thrilled and delighted when the trophies were presented at the Awards Dinner Banquet on Saturday evening. The food was absolutely delicious, by the way!

Cathy Gaber, former EFMLS president and extremely hard worker for three clubs and EFMLS, won the coveted trophy for Each One Teach One. Dr. Jeffrey Post, Curator of Gems and Minerals for the Smithsonian Institution, was the guest speaker at the Banquet. He was also the AFMS Scholarship Award winner. He personally came to see George and Terry’s cases and exclaimed how outstanding they were. We wish Dr. Dave Bohaska and Dr. Bob Purdy, as well as many members of MGS, could also have been there.

The Bulletin Editors Breakfast was held early Sunday morning. The food was very good for those who could eat so early in the morning. Afterward, the awards were given out by outgoing Bulletin Editors Advisory Chairman Barbara Fenstemacher. It was orderly and well handled! John Redick, MGS editor, won 2nd Place for the MGS newsletter under the New Editor category, and Debbie Burdette won 3rd Place for the AFF newsletter under the New Editor category. Our club was also recognized with a 2nd Place for Terry Cirrincione for her Original Non-Technical article called, “The
Mine in the Sky,” and the Trophy Award for Terry for Original Poem “Silvery Delight.”

Next year’s EFMLS 51st Convention and Show will be held in Syracuse, New York, the weekend of July 13 – 15, 2001, as the Gem and Mineral Society of Syracuse celebrates its 50th Anniversary. Members, why don’t we plan on more participation?

"Sure this is exciting, but Lee Creek is next month!"

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**Field Trips**

**March 10** - MGS Trip to Liverpool Point. Limit of 5 people. Call in 5 March between 7 and 8 PM: 301-869-2662 (Dave Anderson).

**April 4** - Lee Creek Trip Call In. Here it is! Call in between 6 and 9 PM, 410-285-5554 (Dick Grier).

**April 14** - MGS Trip to the PCS Phosphate Mine (Lee Creek).

**May 12** - MGS Trip to Pope's Creek. Limit of 5 people. Call in 7 May between 7 and 8 pm: 301-869-2662 (Dave Anderson).
Upcoming Events


March 17 - 18. Gem Lapidary and Mineral Society of Montgomery County MD, Inc. Montgomery County Fairgrounds, 16 Chestnut Street, Gaithersburg, Maryland (301) 926-7374.

March 24-25. 11th Annual Mineral, Jewelry and Fossil Show and Sale, sponsored by the Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club and the Clearwater Nature Center. Harmony Hall Regional Center, 10701 Livingston Road, Fort Washington, MD. (301) 567-9116.


March 31- April 1. Atlantic Micromounters Conference sponsored by the Micromineralogists of the National Capital Area. Univ. of Maryland, College Park. For info and registration, contact Steve Weinberger, PO Box 302, Glyndon, MD 21071-0302 or e-mail <cweinber@bcpl.net>

April 7-8. 28th Annual Showers of Gems and Minerals Show, sponsored by the Kanawha Rock and Gem Club. South Charleston Community Center, South Charleston, West Virginia. (304) 344-5010.

May 19. Annual Goucher Swap/Sell hosted by the Chesapeake Gem & Mineral Society. Goucher College, Dulaney Valley Rd & I-695; Towson, MD. (410) 560-2134.

July 14-16. EFMLS Convention & Show hosted by the Gem & Mineral Society of Syracuse; Syracuse, NY (315) 458-7177.

September 14 - 16. Paul Desautels Micromount Symposium; Baltimore, MD.

October 20 -21. 38th Annual Atlantic Coast Gem & Mineral Show sponsored by the Gem Cutters Guild of Baltimore. Pikesville Armory, 610 Reisterstown Rd; Pikesville, MD (410) 833-7926.

November 3-4. 32nd Annual "Gemarama" Gem, Jewelry & Lapidary Show, sponsored by the Tuscarora Lapidary Society. CFS, School at Church Farm, Bus. Rt. 30 & Rt.202, Exton, PA. (610) 446-3246.

The MGS Needs a Newsletter Editor!!
Become the envy of family, friends and associates
Please contact John Redick (301-855-8365) or Mel Hurd (301-630-7054) if you are interested in this exciting position.
(Must have a computer.)
During the spring session, the guest speaker will be the dynamic Bob Jones, Senior Editor for Rock & Gem Magazine. This will be one session that you won’t want to miss! If you have never attended a workshop before you are in for a real treat. You will find very modern lodges with private facilities, a large dining room where meals are served family style, and instructors who will willingly assist you in learning whatever class or classes you chose to take.

Bob Jones has travelled extensively and his programs are very informative as well as humorous. He is one of our most popular speakers and we are privileged to have him take time from his busy schedule to be with us. He's currently Chairman for the 2001 Tucson Gem & Mineral Show and has promised to share with us some of the details of how he obtained the Faberg exhibit planned there for this February.

As of this printing, confirmation has not yet been received from our fall speaker so we cannot publish his name, but we are certain that those attending that session will not be disappointed.

For more information, contact Esther Dunn, 1102 Camilla Dr.; Ozark, AL 36360-2502. (334)774-2172

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**Latest News From NPEC (Liverpool Point)**

from Deanna Wheeler  
Friday 12 January, 2001

Greetings Friends of Nanjemoy-

It has been many weeks since you received the last update.  
There now is news to share.

1. Maryland Rock Industries, the company that wanted to mine Douglas Point, is exercising their option to purchase Douglas Point, the 1300 ac parcel that PEPCO owns. As of last week the sale was not finalized.

2. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Charles County Commissioners, Dept. of Interior - Bureau of Land Management, and Maryland DNR was signed on Dec. 13th. The MOU states that the three parties will work together to make plans for the management of what they call the “Douglas Point properties” which include Douglas Point, Wilson’s Landing (Mallow’s Bay), and the Canter properties, N and S of Douglas Point. The Conservation Fund has been negotiating to purchase these properties.

3. Maryland Rock Industries has filed an appeal. They feel that the decision (our victory) by the Zoning Board of Appeals was wrong. They cite several reasons. The main ones are —influence by the Governor when he wrote the letter to the Commissioners saying that he wanted Douglas Point protected, and that the Zoning Board of Appeals can’t rule on any effects/impacts that will occur on
the Douglas Point property, only on surrounding properties...

The evidence that we presented in the 50+ hours of testimony was strong. I/We feel very confident the the decision will be upheld in court. As far as the nitty gritty...what’s next, timeline, costs to prepare legal documents...we are just finding out. We will let you know as soon as we know.

Deanna Wheeler
protect@nanjemoy.net
301-246-4806

A New Lee Creek Collection Site!

by David M. Andersen

Yes! A new site has been discovered that will come to rival the renowned Lee Creek mine. The site is situated in rolling hills, lightly forested and in a rural setting. It is a place where you could go to get away from it all, even if you could not get some of the finest fossils around.

Charlie Noye found this site in his search for trip sites as Trip Coordinator for the Maryland Geological Society. He has that knack of finding those sites that can produce excellent fossils with a minimum of fuss and muss. Not only that, he and his wife Brenda (not on this particular trip), can make a collection trip a joy to attend. The time we collected the site was an MGS announced trip, attended only by Charlie and myself. That is unfortunate, especially when one sees the specimens we had found, which we displayed at the following MGS meeting. It will be a site I will return to many times in the future.

The site is in northeastern Pennsylvania, off of a paved rural road. The parking area is small, but easy to access. A barrier across a dirt access road dictates that you walk to the collection area. The walk is approximately a quarter mile, and not difficult at all. The problem is walking out with all of the fossils you can possibly carry! A gentleman who owns the land had leased it to a mining company in days past. The company is now gone, but you can still access the fossil bearing deposits. The gentleman does not mind people coming in for the fossils, just don’t shoot his bears. Tracks attest to the presents of bears in the area, but we did not see any when we were collecting. The woodland is not a mature woodland, but is open and has its appeal all the same. But to this city bound country boy, almost any tree is a great sight.

Turning off the dirt access road you walk down a slope to an open rocky area. The fossils are not immediately noticeable, but it will not take you long to find them. A few steps toward a hole in the ground with rocks piled around and you see them immediately. The most beautiful fossil ferns I have ever seen! These were unusual to me in that the fossils were white and the rock (some kind of shale or slate) is black. Reverse of what I have come to expect of plant fossils in other areas of Pennsylvania. But they are wonderful to behold, and rival a Carcharodon megalodon tooth for the more discerning collectors.

Others have been collecting there before. You can pick up a good many fossils without having to cut them out of the stone matrix. Surprisingly, even these fossils are excellent fossils. Previous collectors seem to have put them aside for better specimens. You can collect there without having to chisel or cut the stone matrix if you really want. Then again, there is that mystery of finding that
once in a lifetime fossil under that next layer of stone. If previous collectors were leaving behind very nice fossils, then imagine what is waiting in the stone with just a little bit of work!

The age of the sediment is approximately 350 million years old. Ferns of various types make up the vast majority of the fossils found. Lycopsids are also fairly abundant, and large trunks of these trees can be found. As you become familiar with plant fossils it becomes apparent that some of them are more common than others. It makes collecting that one rare plant as rewarding as that C. megalodon tooth. There are rumored to be insect fossils at this site. Personally, I have yet to collect an insect fossil. It would be the prized piece in my collection. As I have mentioned before, the plant fossils are white or slightly yellowish in color on a black rock matrix. I do not know why this is so. If anyone knows why this area has this coloration, I would certainly like to hear the reason. If the reason is not known, it appears to be an area that an amateur might do some worthwhile work.

Collecting at this site is pretty much like collecting at any other site with shale or slate. A hammer and chisel is a must. A box to carry out the fossils is absolutely necessary (I prefer an old backpack). A rock hammer is nice, but not required. A rock hammer is difficult to use if you are trying to be precise in your cutting. With a chisel you can place the cut in an exact spot, a necessity when you want to cut around a particularly specimen. But in shale and slate matrixes you can never really be certain where the rock will split. Charlie and I have had the misfortune of chiseling around a specimen only to have it split in half at the last cut or when we try to lift it off the matrix. Our solution is a portable brick saw. It is quicker, precise and minimizes the chiseling. I have not found one yet, but I now know that it will have to come from an industrial tool store catering to construction contractors. Not a common item for the amateur collector. I believe I have found such a place and plan to purchase one soon (yes, I am now a hard core fossil plant collector).

And what do you do when you have been a kid all day collecting candy in a candy store? You carry out the candy you have collected, of course. This is where the dedicated fossil plant collectors are separated from those who collect other less exciting fossils. Plant fossils cannot be separated from the rock matrix they are in so you must carry out the rock. Charlie, being more prepared than I, had a small-wheeled two-wheel cart used in stores to move stacks of boxes around. This worked well at first, but was not sufficiently robust to survive the weight of the rocks we had or the gravel road. It eventually broke apart. A cart with large wheels, preferably filled with air for cushioning that could carry wood or plastic boxes that stack on each other is the way to go. I believe the best method is to cut the fossils out with the saw, reducing the amount of unwanted rock matrix, pack these fossils in newspaper and the carrying boxes as you go, then cart them out as you desire. Place the boxes in your car and unpack them at home as you can clean and preserve the fossils. This method minimizes the handling of the fossils. By the way, I think wrapping the specimens in newspaper, not a common practice, is important to minimize the damage to the fossils as they are carried and carted around.

So, is this a new Lee Creek collection site? It is if you are a fossil plant collector. It would be difficult to be a serious fossil plant collector and not go to this site and others in Pennsylvania. So pardon me, dear reader, if you feel I have been deceptive. I get just as excited with a fern as others do with a tooth. Besides, would you have read the article if it was titled "A New Fossil Fern Site in Pennsylvania"?

How do you want to celebrate our 10th anniversary? See page 23
In the News

Diamonds – At tempted Robbery: November 7
Associated Press, ABCNEWS.com

Sherlock Holmes couldn’t have done it better. Scotland Yard thwarted a diamond heist that would have been the world’s largest. A group of thieves used construction equipment to push their way into the London Millennium Dome in the hopes of stealing the Millennium Star diamond as well as other museum quality diamonds. The Millennium Star is a pear-shaped diamond surrounded by 11 rare blue diamonds. It is the third largest diamond ever found, reportedly the world’s most perfect, weighing in at a whopping 203 carats. Scotland Yard having learned of the planned theft, switched the precious stones for fakes before the attempted robbery took place. In the end 11 people were arrested and all the diamonds were returned to the cases.

FYI, according to the Guinness Book of Records, the August 1994 jewelry theft in Cannes, France, at the Carlton Hotel jewelry shop, was the largest jewelry theft – at a cool $43 million.

Fossils – Saltriosaur: November 10
Associated Press, ABCNEWS.com

A new species of dinosaur was discovered in a limestone quarry in northern Italy that may give scientists new information on the movement of land masses. The Saltriosaur is believed to have roamed the area during the Jurassic Era (208 to 140 million years ago), weighed over a ton, had sharp teeth, and was a meat eater. The Saltriosaur is believed to be about 20 million years older, but is very similar to, the American Allosaur.

*Diamonds – Attempted Robbery and Saltriosaur are reprinted from the January 2001 Dopstick, Volume LI, #1 and courtesy of Mary Bateman, editor.

Scientists Study Most Pristine Meteorite Ever Found
The Baltimore Sun, October 13, 2000

Bits of a Canadian meteorite have been distributed to a number of labs worldwide, and researchers are painstakingly analyzing it, looking for amino acids and other organic compounds that could explain the origins of life on earth. This bus-sized meteorite, estimated to weigh 220 tons when it hit earth’s atmosphere in January 2000, shattered into hundreds of fragments before hitting a frozen lake in British Columbia.

More than 70 people saw the fireball. One witness, Canadian Jim Brook, collected 2 pounds of the black, charcoal-like fragments a week after the impact on Tagish Lake and stored the material in a plastic bag in his freezer. Peter G. Brown of the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario said, “These are the most pristine meteorite specimens on the planet right now.” Brook’s careful handling of the material will enable scientists to study matter that is virtually unchanged since the solar system formed some 4.6 billion years ago.

Preliminary tests of Brook’s pristine material found that it is loaded with organic molecules of the type that some experts have suggested could have been the original raw materials for the formation of life on Earth. Subsequent expeditions gathered more than 400 fragments, but by then the material had been sitting in the open for weeks, was likely contaminated and was beginning to erode. The material is about the consistency of dried mud, and rain can cause it to crumble and
wash away.

Reports on these studies of the Tagish Lake [meteorite] may be a year away, Brown said.

Another Planet Found in Our Solar System
The Baltimore Sun, October 26, 2000

Astronomers have discovered a minor planet between Neptune and Pluto in the outer fringes of the solar system, Yale University said yesterday. The minor planet or planetoid, officially named 2000 EB173, measures about 400 miles in diameter, or about one-fourth the size of Pluto.

Astronomers spotted the minor planet using an unusually powerful telescope at the CIDA Observatory in Merida, Venezuela.

Because of its small size, the new planet is known as a “planetoid” or “plutino,” which means “Little Pluto.” “As far as we can tell, this guy has been there since Day One of the solar system, it’s one of the original players, and in that sense it’s like one of the planets,” said Charles Balty, chairman of Yale’s physics department. “The significance of this finding? It’s just, Wow!” Balty said. “After all these years, we can still find something new.”

Bogus Fossil!
The Baltimore Sun (Reuters)

Staff members at the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff (England) were forced to rename one of their prized dinosaurs “iffyosaurus” instead of its past name ichthyosaurus. It appears their sense of humor was needed after discovering that this dinosaur skeleton on display for 116 years is a fake.

The fake ichthyosaurus turned out to be a motley collection of bones, plaster and paint, newspaper sources reported. The deception became obvious when plaster holding the “skeleton” of the marine creature together began to disintegrate. “It was an amalgam of two different types of ichthyosaurus plus a clever attempt at fake parts,” museum curator Caroline Buttlar was quoted as saying.

But the museum will clean up the “iffyosaurus” and exhibit it as an example of Victorian fakery.

Land of the Mammoth
Discovery Channel

Do you remember that fully preserved carcass of a 20,000 year-old woolly mammoth found last year? You can review this in The Rostrum (Volume 9, #2, page 23). The 23-ton ice block containing the beast has been studied for the past year in an ice cave near the town of Khatanga, Siberia. The Discovery Channel will be airing the unfolding story of this mammoth find on March 11, 2001 at 8:00 pm ET. The program is titled, "Land of the Mammoth." Online coverage began February 26, 2001.

Lee Creek Recommended Hotels
Lemon Tree Motel, Rts 117 & 33, Chocowinity, 919-946-8001.
Days Inn, near Hwy 17 and 264. (North side of Washington on Hwy 17) Turn left when you hit 17. 919-946-6141.
Please Give Us Your Input!
The 10th anniversary committee has tried to narrow down possible events the membership might want to attend. We will be discussing the topics below at the next meeting and want your preferences. If you cannot attend, mail this form to:

Mel Hurd
3307 Huntley Sq. Dr. T-2
Temple Hills, MD 20748

Anniversary Survey
(Check your choice)

WHEN:
    __September
    __October
    __November

WHAT:
    __Dinner - Sit down or buffet stations
    __Cruise
    __Party - Rented hall
    __Catered Cookout

WHERE:
    __Baltimore
    __DC
    __Annapolis
    __Chesapeake Bay

COMMENTS:

Detach and Send
CLUB PURPOSE
The Maryland Geological Society is a society comprised of both amateur and professional mineral and fossil collectors. It is the intent of the MGS to emphasize collecting, identification, study and display aspects of the geological sciences. The society is a nonprofit organization.

CORRESPONDENCES
Correspondences should be mailed to Barbara Ermler, Secretary, Route 2, Box 155, The Plains, VA 22171, (703) 253-5556.

MATERIAL FOR PUBLICATION
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DUES
Annual dues are $15.00 per individual adult member and free to children under 18 years of age when accompanying a paying adult member. Applications for membership may be obtained by contacting Dick Grier, Sr., Membership Chairman, 8052 Kavanagh Road, Baltimore, MD 21222, (410) 285-5554. Renewal dues are payable by January 1st of each year.

AFFILIATIONS
The Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies, Inc.
The American Federation of Mineralogical Societies.

"Knowledge is our destiny . . ." Jacob Bronowski