



HAGS/AEG – Meeting Announcement

Thursday, April 11, 2019 6:30 p.m.

Amber: Miniature Scenes Frozen in Time

Presented by: Larry Smith, P.G. – PA DEP HSCA Program

Abstract: The focus of this presentation will concern inclusions in amber. Amber is categorized as a semi-precious gemstone, and has been used for jewelry and carved ornaments for thousands of years. It is derived from the resin of coniferous trees, which consists of terpenoid compounds, acid, and alcohol. When buried, volatiles are driven off, due to pressure and temperature, and through polymerization the material hardens. Given the proper taphonomy conditions, fossils in amber can be preserved with the minutest details.

When extracted from its matrix, amber may be found as rounded to fragile runnels, and display signs of transportation in high or low energy environments, or appear as an in-place deposition, such as in a coal seam (resinite). Fractures in amber are generally conchoidal and the harder amber (e.g., Burmite) may exhibit fracture planes. It has a Mohs scale rating from 2.0 to 3, may fluoresce under a UV light, and if burned will omit a pine scent.

The presentation will also include discussion of some recently discovered exotic inclusions that have been found in Burmite from northern Myanmar.

Speaker Bio: Larry Smith is a P.G. who attended Bloomsburg University where he received a BS degree in Geology. He worked as an environmental geologist for over 20 years before accepting a position with DEP's Hazardous Sites Cleanup program in 2012, as a geologist and regional project manager. He's been interested in plant fossils since he was a high school student, and supplemented his geology studies with botany and wetland courses to help provide a better understanding of plant fossils and their environments. In 2007 he became especially enamored with fossils in amber and has been an avid collector ever since. His collection consists of hundreds of specimens which includes spiders, insects, and plants - some of which are newly-identified species.



Middle Cretaceous pseudoscorpion in Burmese amber.



A potential Neuroptera in Burmite.

Photos courtesy of the L.B. Smith Collection.

Meeting Location:

AEG Offices
441 Friendship Road
Harrisburg, PA
(not far from Bass Pro Shops)

Dinner at 4:45 – 6:15
Fiesta Mexico
3957 Paxton Street
(between Ruby Tuesday
and Nissan dealership)

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RSVP for dinner & meeting by no later than noon Tuesday, April 9, 2019.

RSVP Amy Randolph at secretaryhags@gmail.com or 717.395.3181.

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