

# Minutes of the SW Chapter meeting on October 21, 2015

President Bill Biesele opened the meeting at 7 p.m. welcoming the 25 attendees, especially any new members.

- \* He asked to indicate on the attendant's list their wish to have a December potluck get-together or not;
- \* Reminded people that elections of officers were coming up.

Elisabeth asked if there were any comments on the Minutes of September 16 which were e-mailed to all members a few days before. Nobody had any amendments to make, so they were voted on, seconded and as such entered into the record, to be subsequently posted on UFOP's website.

As Mike was absent, Bill read the treasurer's report. There had been no transactions, and the end balance dated September 30 showed the amount of \$788.55.

Bill introduced our guest speaker, Dr. Larry Davis, who is currently with the Education Outreach Program of the Bryce Canyon History Association, and was also our guest speaker in May of this year. Between 1992 and 2007 he published many articles and three books, and has been given numerous educational awards. Dr. Davis, who is also a member of our chapter, has had a very interesting and varied professional life. He started out with 12 years in the U.S. Army, including 20 months in Vietnam, after which he earned his MS and PhD at Washington State University. He taught geology for 15 years at that same university and another 15 years at the University of Notre Dame in Australia.

The title of this evening's presentation was "Mary Anning: Early English Paleontologist."

Dr. Davis started thanking UFOP for participating in the Bryce GeoFest; it was a great success.

He then continued to impress us with the life of Mary Anning (1799-1848) who lived in an English village on the coast of Devon called Lyme Regis and never left it. (This village figured in the film "The French Lieutenant's Woman"). Dr. Davis traveled to England to acquire first-hand knowledge of this remarkable woman. Mary never married and made her living collecting fossils from the beach, and nearby areas, which she then sold to interested parties, mostly scientists. She taught herself to read and write English and French and became well-known for her remarkable fossil findings, incl. four new species of ammonoid, the first terrasaur, first Dimorphodon; but the scientists who had bought these fossils from her (Cuvier, Owen, de la Beche, Leichhardt, Mantell) never recognized her in their writings. It took nearly two centuries before women were seen as equal partners and were given universal recognition for their work in the scientific field.

When Mary died of breast cancer at 49, she was buried near St. Michael's Church and Henry de la Beche, who had become a good friend of hers, gave a eulogy in which he mentioned that Mary had contributed much by her talents and knowledge to geology. Also, a stained glass window was created in her memory, and people are leaving fossils at the bottom panel, small tokens of the growing recognition of her name and her rightful place in the field of paleontology. Several biographies have been written about her, including articles of Dr. Davis, and there is even a yearly prize awarded to non-scientific female paleontologists like Mary Anning, who contribute to science.

Dr. Davis ended his interesting lecture by promising to send us a list of Mary Anning literature.

Meeting adjourned: 8 p.m.

Submitted by Elisabeth Nipperus, Secr. SW UFOP Chapter  
November 18, 2015