***THE CASE OF THE MISSED ID  
Stephanie Leonard, RGMS Member***

But my university botany class of 1971 came from my memory bank and sent me to search the fern family, the one with fronds. And indeed, fossilized fern images had a close, if not exact, image of my worm! The case of the MISIDENTIFICATION it was.

If you were at the April 5th RGMS General Meeting and were so waiting for your raffle ticket to be picked from the rotating bin, you might have heard a loud vocal exclamation when MY number was called. Lucky me, I was handed the Marine Worm fossil prize, specifically, **Denise** called it the “*Didontogester* Marine Worm”.

It was a 2-piece, halved, dark-brown 3” specimen which depicted a long-stranded worm that was cut straight down the center with spiny appendages out to the sides. In the dim light of the meeting room, it appeared to be somewhat akin to a centipede of today, so puns were made about me ”having worms”!

Yes, some good laughs and even silversmith **Jill Atkins** made the comment to encase it in a silver bezel or wrap in wire to wear it around my neck to (show my worm). That would be a hefty weight to have to bear.

Once I was home and on the Internet to research this special *Didontogaster*, the magnifying glass revealed a very different scene in that rock. Scrolling through the images of fossilized worms did not really show a match, but once I closely surveyed the “appendages,” I was certain my fossil couldn’t be that creature.

https://c1.staticflickr.com/5/4020/4388936799\_76270d6394\_b.jpg

I am a proud owner of a *Pecopteris miltoni/saronius*  from the Carbon-iferous Period, circa 301 million years ago. Specimens are found all over the world, but the best ones are from the states of Pennsylvania and West Virginia. These ferns grew from seeds to become tree-like plants known to achieve 50’ in height with a base 5’ in diameter. Now I have a special fallen frond.

So, many thanks to the person/ member whose donation to the fossil raffle brought this leaflet to my collection of honored ancient history. It will be highlighted with the Trilobites and sea fossils on a special shelf, protected.

But now, I am on a fossil hunt to find a real ancient worm.

Let us go fossil hounding!!

A close-up of a plant imprint

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