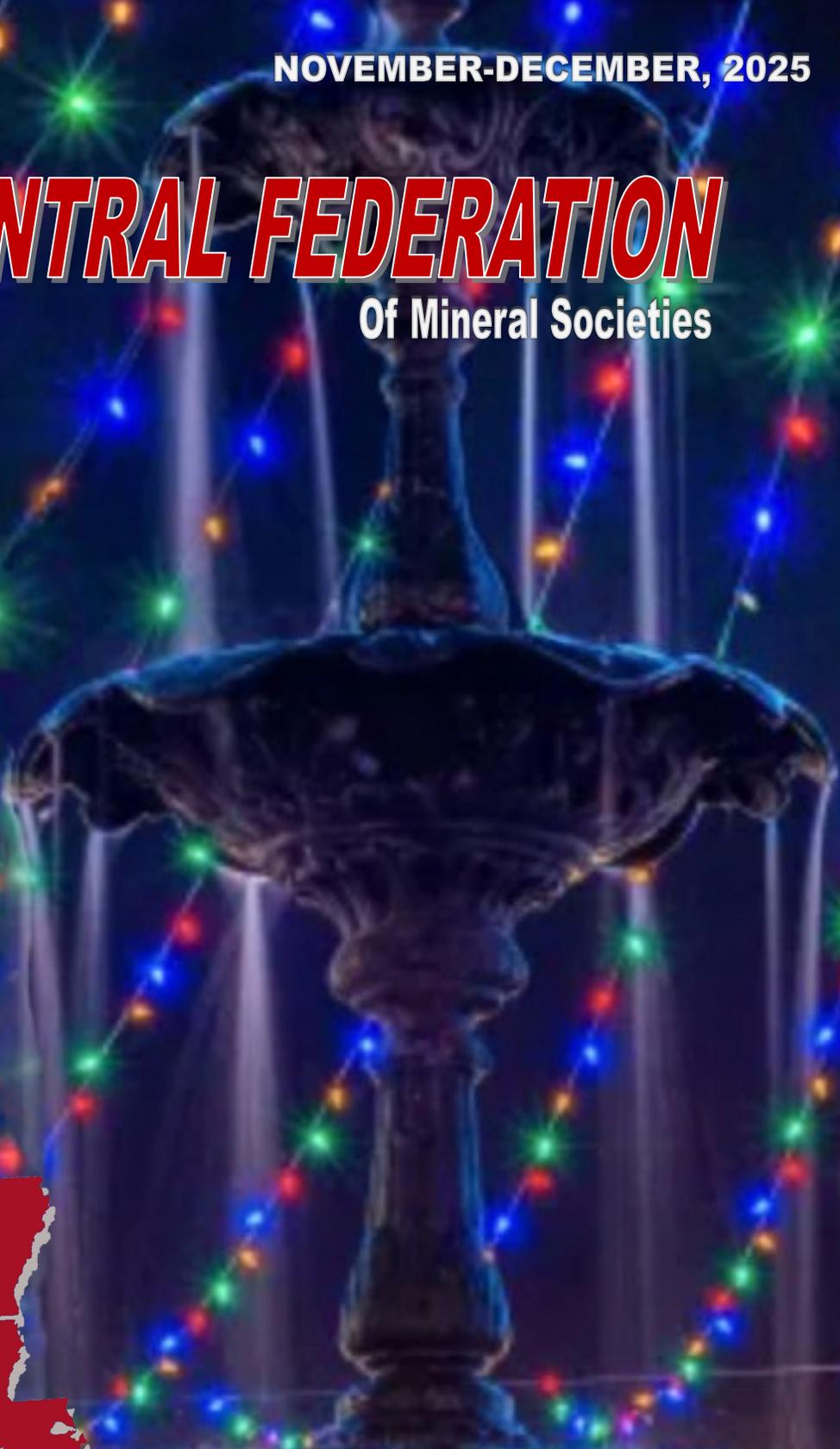


NOVEMBER-DECEMBER, 2025

NEWSLETTER OF THE
SOUTH CENTRAL FEDERATION
Of Mineral Societies



Member of: The American Federation of Mineral Societies

ON THE COVER

JP Thompson/Moment Collection via Getty Images
Modified by Susan Burch

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SOUTH CENTRAL FEDERATION OF MINERAL SOCIETIES, INC.



2025 SCFMS OFFICERS

President: Don Shurtz

Executive V-P: Sigrid Stewart

Secretary: Vacant

Treasurer: Henry Rojas

Web Master: Don Shurtz

Exec. Secretary: Susan Burch

**AFMS Endowment Fund Raffle
for SCFMS: Walt Beneze**

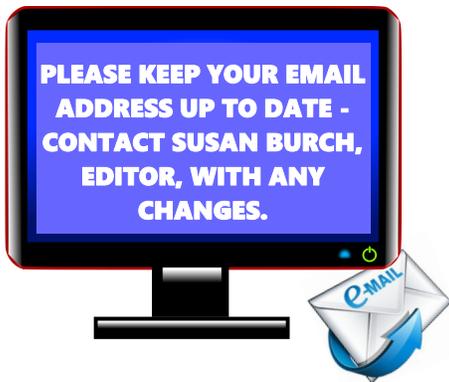
**SCFMS Endowment Fund
Treasurer: Walt Beneze**

**Nominating Committee –
Ron Carman**

Past President: Roger Burford

For more information or to send information to the SCFMS or an officer, please email:

scfmsinformation@gmail.com



PURPOSE

*To promote popular interest and education in the various earth sciences, in particular those hobbies dealing with the art of lapidaries and the science of minerals, fossils, as well as their associated fields.

*To cooperate with educational and scientific institutions or other groups engaged in increasing knowledge in the earth sciences.

*To cooperate with or become members of similar Federations in the United States and elsewhere.

*To assist in the formation of earth sciences societies in localities where public interest justifies their formation.

E-MAIL ADDRESS CORRECTION AND CHANGES

It is each members responsibility to send your email address corrections to the SCFMS Editor:

Susan Burch,
scfmseditor@yahoo.com

NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY

DUPLICATION

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

THE FINAL DEADLINE, ETC.

For each newsletter the deadline is the 25th of the month prior to scheduled publication. February-April-June-August-October-December all provide the deadline for the following bi-monthly issue. Although, the Editor may chose to adjust the deadline due to circumstances.

As a reminder! Shop hints and tips that are used in this newsletter have not been evaluated for safety or reliability by myself. Please use caution and safety when trying out any new idea. Please, if you have something urgent, send me a text, but send newsletter content via email.

ANNUAL SHOW 2026

TBD

ANNUAL MEETING

TBD

SCFMS WEB-SITE:
WWW.SCFMS.NET

The SCFMS is a member of the American Federation of Mineral Societies. amfed.org

NEWSLETTER EDITOR/BEAC:

Susan Burch
scfmseditor@yahoo.com





THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER
SCFMS CONVENTION 2025
 Don Shurtz, SCFMS President

For me and two others, the Convention activities started Friday afternoon, October 17, at a Chase Bank branch in the northern part of Austin. Two of our SCFMS Officers (Sigrid Stewart and Susan Burch) and I met with a Chase banking official to update the authorized users and check signers for the checking account. Then it was off to the hotel to check in. Upon arrival, I found the hotel could not find my reservation. I was able to show the hotel my original reservation confirmation email and two additional confirmation emails from Choice Hotels, but unfortunately, it didn't make a difference; the hotel had already filled all its rooms. I called Choice Hotels' customer service. The hotel chain, as part of its standard policy, booked me a room at a nearby motel by crediting my account with award points and then using those points to book the room. For the second night, I booked a reservation well to the north (Georgetown, TX) at a motel from a different chain than the one on my first night. The second night ended up costing me as much as the original reservation would have been for both nights. I later found that the original hotel had canceled my reservation (along with several others) to get rid of single-person, low-rate reservations so it could book multiple-party reservations at a much higher rate. Really nice of them to inconvenience people. The hotel situation was the worst part of the trip.

The Editor and Webmaster's breakfast kicked off the second day's activities. The breakfast also featured a guest speaker, Deborah Wilson Taylor from Austin Community College. The topic of her speech was "Website Resources and Guidelines". Her speech was very informative, stressing ways that our websites could be improved and updated. Many club websites were built in the 1990s using the technology of that timeframe. Most of those clubs are still using the original technology and are sorely in need of updates. The awards for the winning website, newsletters, and authors were then presented.

The next activity of the day was the Annual Meeting. Last year's meeting lasted a bit over 2 hours, but this year's lasted only 1 hour and 10 minutes. I thank Sigrid Stewart and Susan Burch for taking notes for the Meeting Minutes and for Susan preparing the official Minutes that appear in this same newsletter. A budget for 2026 was passed. The budget was based on an SCFMS membership count of 3400 (3100 adults and 300 juniors). Changes from the 2025 budget included raising the Convention travel allowance from \$200.00 to \$250.00 per authorized traveler, \$250.00 for Junior Awards, \$250.00 for a Zoom Meeting contract, and \$200.00 for Miscellaneous Expenses. Offic-

ers for 2026 and 2027 were also elected. The 2026-2027 officers are President - Sigrid Stewart, Executive Vice President - Rick Price, Treasurer - Henry Rojas, District I VP - Janice Bowen, District II VP - Stephen (Steve) Blyskal, District IV VP - Ron Carman, District V VP, - Laura McWilliams, District VI VP - Betty Gosewehr, District VII VP - Raymond Lynch, and District VIII VP - Del Glasner. Susan Burch will remain as the Executive Secretary (an appointed position).

JC Moore, the AFMS President, announced that the Midwest Regional Federation Convention will be Memorial Day weekend in St. Charles, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. He invited everyone to attend. To conclude the meeting, a request for bids to host upcoming SCFMS Annual Meetings was issued. As a reminder, the SCFMS has now allocated \$300.00 to offset any club out-of-pocket expenses for hosting the Annual Meeting. We need bids for 2026 and beyond. In 2029, the SCFMS will host the AFMS Convention. This will be at the same time and location as the 2029 SCFMS meeting - the 2029 bids should include provisions for both the SCFMS and the AFMS Convention and Annual Meetings.

The final event of the convention was the Awards Banquet. The dinner was held at Nature's Gallery, a fine mineral retailer in Austin. The Gallery was open for an hour before the dinner to allow shopping with a 10% discount. Many of the pieces were museum-quality mineral specimens. What a lot of eye-candy for a rockhound. At the Awards Banquet, we finally awarded a ribbon for a Competitive Case. The plaque for the SCFMS Scholarship Nominee was also shown and will be formally presented at an upcoming Houston Gem and Mineral Society meeting.

I thank JC Moore, the AFMS President and his wife, Donna Moore, the AFMS Secretary, for attending our meetings. I thank the John Connors and the Austin Gem and Mineral Society for planning and executing the SCFMS convention - they did an exceptional job. The facilities at their clubhouse were perfect for the Editor and Webmaster Breakfast and the Annual Meeting. Their connections with Natures Gallery made the Awards Banquet the best SCFMS or AFMS Awards Banquet that I have had the opportunity to attend. My only wish was that more SCFMS Clubs could have participated in all the activities.

As this is my last official communication as the SCFMS President, I heartfully thank all the SCFMS officers and members for their support during my two years as SCFMS President. It has been an honor to serve.



THE SOUTH-CENTRAL FEDERATION OF MINERAL SOCIETIES
ARKANSAS • LOUISIANA • TEXAS
Member of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies
MINUTES OF THE 81ST ANNUAL MEETING
October 18, 2025
Hosted by the Austin Gem and Mineral Society (AGMS)
Show held at Palmer Events Center, meeting held at AGMS Clubhouse

The meeting was called to order by Don Shurtz, President, at 2:05 PM.
 Don welcomed AFMS President J.C. Moore and his wife, AFMS Secretary Donna Moore
 Don recognized past AFMS President Ron Carman
 Don recognized past SCFMS Presidents Walt Beneze and Ron Carman
 The Pledge was led by Don Shurtz
 The invocation was given by Walt Beneze
 A quorum was present.
 Don announced, this meeting is also being broadcast as a ZOOM Meeting. Please be mindful, so that the ZOOM attendees can hear what is being said.
 Don welcomed all directors, delegates, and non-delegates to our annual meeting.
 Don thanked the Austin Gem and Mineral Society for all the work that they have put into the AFMS Convention – the Breakfast with the Editors and Webmasters, the Annual Meeting, and the Awards Banquet.
 Don introduced Ron Carman as the Parliamentarian for this meeting.

Roll Call of Member Societies

Ark-La-Tex GMS – Laura MacWilliams President, YES
Arlington GMS – NO
Austin GMS – John Connors, President, YES
Baton Rouge GMS – NO
Big Spring Prospector Club – NO
Central Texas GMS – Linda Walker President, YES
Chihuahuan Desert GMS – NO
Clear Lake GMS – NO
CERA (Corporate Employee Recreation Association) –NO
Dallas Gem & Mineral Society – NO
DeRidder GMS – NO
East Texas GMS – Julia Toombs, YES
Fort Worth GMS –Janice Bowen, President, represented by Raelyn Perry, YES
Fredericksburg GMS –NO
Gem, Mineral, and Lapidary Society of Central Louisiana – NO
GMLS of Louisiana – NO
Geological Society of San Antonio – NO
Golden Spread GMS – NO
Gulf Coast GMS – Rick Price, YES
Hi-Plains GMS – NO
Hot Springs Geology Club – NO
Houston GMS – Logan Wilcox, President, represented by Steve Blyskal, YES
Lubbock GMS – Walter Beneze, YES
Midland GMS – NO
Northeast Louisiana GMS–NO
Paleontological Society of Austin – Jennifer Aziz President, represented by Eric Jones, YES
Pleasant Oaks GMC of Dallas – Joe Vulk, President, represented by Don Shurtz, YES
Rolling Rock Club – Walter Beneze, YES
Southwest GMS – Joann Socash, President, represented by Joann Deluna, YES
Spring River Gem & Mineral Club – NO
Texoma Rockhounds Inc. – NO
Tri-City GMS – NO



*Pyrite 'heart' on Barite and Fluorite—Morocco,
 Vendor-Earth's Fine Art,
 Austin GMS Annual Show
 Photo by Susan Burch*

Continued from Page 5

Waco GMS – NO

Williamson County GMS – Jo Ann Tooley, YES

Roll Call of Officers and Committee Chairs

President, Scholarship, Website Contest - Don Shurtz, YES

Executive Vice President, Budget Committee – Sigrid Stewart, YES

Secretary – Vacant

Executive Secretary, BEAC, Newsletter Editor – Susan Burch, YES

Treasurer, Budget – Henry Rojas NO

Past President – Roger Burford NO

District I – Janice Bowen, YES

District II – Steve Blyskal, YES; Steve Blyskal appointed at the meeting

District IV, Uniform Rules – Ron Carman, YES

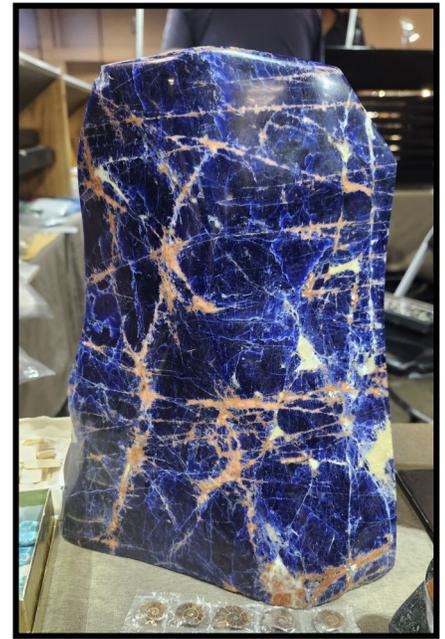
District VI – Betty Gosewehr NO

District VII – Ray Lynch NO

District VIII – Del Glasner, YES

Districts with Vacant Position – District III, District V

Endowment Fund & Treasurer – Walt Beneze, YES



Sodalite, Austin GMS Annual Show

Photo by Susan Burch

Committees with Vacant Chairs:

AFMS Endowment Fund Raffle, Auditing Committee.

Boundaries, Commemorative Stamps, Constitution and By-Laws, Conservation and Legislation, Education and All-American Award, Golden Spark Plug Award, Historian, Juniors Program, Long Range Planning, Nominating Committee, Program Library & Competition, Public Relations, Rockhound of the Year, Show Coordinator, Ways and Means

BUSINESS MEETING

Old Business:

Minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting: The Minutes of the 2024 SCFMS Annual Meeting were published in the January-February 2025 SCFMS Newsletter. No Changes.

Motion to accept minutes 1) Janice Bowen 2) Laura McWilliams

The motion Passed

No other old business.

New Business:

Officer Reports

The following reports are in the packet. Unless anyone objects, we will vote to accept the reports as a group rather than individually:

President's Report – Don Shurtz, present.

Treasurer's Report – Henry Rojas, not present.

District VII Vice-President Report – Steve Blyskal, present.

District VIII Vice President Report – Del Glasner, present

Motion to accept meeting packet 1) Laura McWilliams 2) John Conners

The motion Passed

Reports were not received from the following officers:

Executive Vice-President – Sigrid Stewart, present

Secretary – vacant

Executive Secretary – Susan Burch, present; Report given at the meeting and sent in late

Past President – Roger Burford, not present

District I Vice-President (Northeast Texas) – Janice Bowen

District III - vacant

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District IV (Vice-President, Central Texas – Ron Carman, present
 District V – vacant
 District VI Vice-President (Rollin' Rock Club), Betty Gosewehr, not present

Susan Burch, Exec Secretary, says 25 clubs have paid dues, a few more should trickle in. HGMS proper forms needed to complete dues processing.

Mike Smith, who is the new SCFMS website admin, has revamped the SCFMS website. He has introduced email forwarding for security and ease of role changes.

No logins on Zoom

Motion to accept Website report 1) Jo Ann Tooley 2) Joann DeLuna

The motion Passed

Directory: no change. Don Shurtz will head up Directory Committee.

Conservation Legislation will be Rick Price

Treasurer's report presented

Motion to accept 1) Linda Walker 2) John Conners

The motion Passed

District 1 report given by Janice Bowen

Motion to accept 1) Susan Burch 2) Laura McWilliams

The motion Passed

Discussion of Districts

District 1 (North Texas) Janice Bowen

District 2 (Southeast Texas) Steve Blyskal (by appointment) submitted report

Motion to accept 1) Lauren McWilliams 2) Janice Bowen

District 3 (South Texas) Vacant

District 4 (Central Texas) Ron Carmen

District 5 (West Texas) Vacant

District 6 (Rollin' Rock Club) Betty Gosewehr (absent due to recent death of her husband)

District 7 (Arkansas) Raymond Lynch

District 8 (Louisiana) Del Glasner

Committee Reports:

The following reports are in the packet. Unless anyone objects, we will vote to accept the reports as a group rather than individually:

The Budget Committee Report will be deferred until later in the meeting

Endowment Fund Committee Report – Walter Beneze, present

Endowment Fund Treasurer's Report – Walter Beneze, present

Scholarship Fund Report – Don Shurtz, present

Uniform Rules Committee Report – Ron Carman, present

Website Report – Don Shurtz, present

Website Contest Report – Don Shurtz, present

Motion to accept the Committee Reports present in the packet, 1) Jo Ann Tooley 2) Joann Deluna

The motion passed

Reports were not received from the following committees:

Ad Hoc Committee Insurance Programs – Susan Burch, present; clubs can request an insurance rider by sending Susan the completed form supplied on the SCFMS website.

Bulletin Editor's Aids and Club Publications – Susan Burch, present; Susan Burch reports the SCFMS Editor and Author contest awards were given out that morning. The deadline for next year's contest is January 12th, 2026.



*Volcano Agate, Austin
 GMS Annual Show,
 Photo by Susan Burch*

Continued from Page 7

Editor of the Newsletter – Susan Burch, present; Susan requests new content that will not be submitted for contests be sent to her for consideration for sharing in the newsletter.

Directory – Don Shurtz, present

Auditing Committee – vacant

Boundaries - vacant

Commemorative Stamps – vacant

Conservation and Legislation – vacant, Rick Price to start next year

Education and All-American Award – vacant

Golden Spark Plug Award – vacant

Historian – vacant

Juniors Programs – vacant

Long Range Planning – vacant

Nominating Committee – vacant

Program Library and Competition – vacant

Public Relations – vacant

Rockhound of the Year – vacant

Safety – vacant

Show Coordinator – vacant

Supplies and Publications – vacant

Ways and Means – vacant

Budget for 2026:

The Proposed Budget was presented by Sigrid Stewart.
The motion to accept 1) Linda Walker 2) John Connors
The motion Passed



*Volcano Agate, Austin GMS Annual Show,
Photo by Susan Burch*

Election of Officers

President: Sigrid Stewart

Executive Vice-President: Rick Price

Secretary: vacant

Treasurer: Henry Rojas

District I VICE-PRESIDENT: Janice Bowen (Appointed)

District II VICE-PRESIDENT: Steve Blyskal (Appointed)

District III VICE-PRESIDENT: Vacant

District IV VICE-PRESIDENT: Ron Carman

District V VICE-PRESIDENT: Vacant

District VI VICE-PRESIDENT: Betty Gosewehr

District VII VICE-PRESIDENT: Raymond Lynch

District VIII VICE-PRESIDENT: Del Glasner

The motion to accept 1) Laura McWilliams 2) Janice Bowen
The motion Passed

Next Convention

We need a member club or society to host the 2026 convention. There is no volunteer club or society set to host for 2026, 2027, 2028, or 2029.

The 2029 Convention will host the AFMS Convention as well as SCFMS convention.

\$300 is available to defray expenses.

AFMS President J.C. Moore and wife Donna, AFMS Secretary cautioned that clubs need not expand their shows or spend extra money. A place for the meeting and awards banquet is needed and attendees should pay cost of the breakfast and banquet meals.

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Dallas Show venue provided the meeting room and swag for holding the event there. (Per Sigrid Stewart) John Connors noted that it helps to hold the meeting at a clubhouse to defray costs.

The most important things are the Editors and Webmasters Breakfast, the Annual Meeting and the Awards Banquet.

Austin GMS President, John Smith offered to give tips if the club contacts him.

Don expressed, clubs may be considering hosting an upcoming Convention, but need time to review the topic with their society/club executive board and/or members. He asked that you coordinate with the incoming President, Sigrid Stewart.

Laura McWilliams, president of the Ark-La-Tex Gem and Mineral Society, says they may host SCFMS in 2027 or 2028. Their show is the 3rd weekend in August.

Sigrid Stewart, of the Houston Gem and Mineral Society, stated that Houston hosting again in a future year was possible.

Final Items from the floor and Adjournment

A point was raised by one of the attendees that it would help to clarify the duties of the various committees with some estimate of how much work was involved. Mike Smith said he could work on that and Sigrid Stewart volunteered to help. Most are listed in the by-laws and constitution.

J.C. Moore made another pitch for the St. Charles AFMS Convention next Memorial Day weekend. The show has both retail and wholesale sales. The hotel is 3 or 4 blocks away and there is a camping area for RVs and vans adjacent to the show area. The Show is Saturday and Sunday and the AFMS Convention is on Friday, during Show set-up. The dinner is Saturday night.

Other attractions in the Chicago area are the John G. Shedd Aquarium and the Museum of Science and Industry.

Don adjourned the meeting at 3:09 PM

Respectfully submitted by Don Shurtz, Sigrid Stewart, and Susan Burch; Compiled by Susan Burch



Photos: Upper left, stone mosaic floor at the Palmer Events Center in Austin, TX. Upper center, upper right, lower left and lower center, Ammonites, All photos from the Austin GMS Annual Show, by Susan Burch

ROCKHOUNDS LOST IN 2025

From the Louisiana Clubs—

Richard Gosewehr, husband of Betty Gosewehr, from the DeRidder Gem and Mineral Society. August 20 2025.

Don Gednetz, who made necklaces with faceted stones glued into 9mm rounds.

Leo Perry, a Chipalota Knapper.

From the Texas Clubs—

Dr. Harold Temple (Professor of Chemistry at Wayland Baptist University) passed in January 2025, and Jim Matlock passed in February 2025. Both were long time members of the Hi-Plains Gem & Mineral Society and avid Rockhounds.

Fort Worth G&MS lost Harold Elles Bonham.

East Texas Gem & Mineral Society reports the passing of Karen Urbielewicz at the end of September.

Houston G&MS lost Terry Proctor and Charlie Fredrigill, both former Presidents who were very active in the club.

On April 19, 2025, the Tri-City Gem and Mineral Society disbanded and is no longer in existence. The Tri-City Gem and Mineral Society was organized in 1967 by a group of rockhounds. Serving Temple, Belton, Killeen, and all of Bell County, we served people of all ages who shared an interest in rocks, minerals, and gemstones.

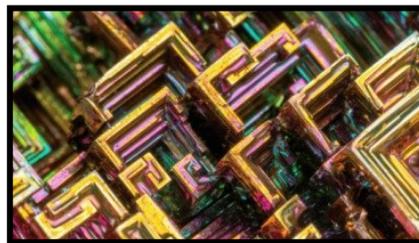
IN LOVING
Memory

If your club or society has recently lost a member, please share their information with me so we may honor and remember their life and contributions. Including a photo and a short write-up about their involvement, positions held, and interests would be greatly appreciated. SB

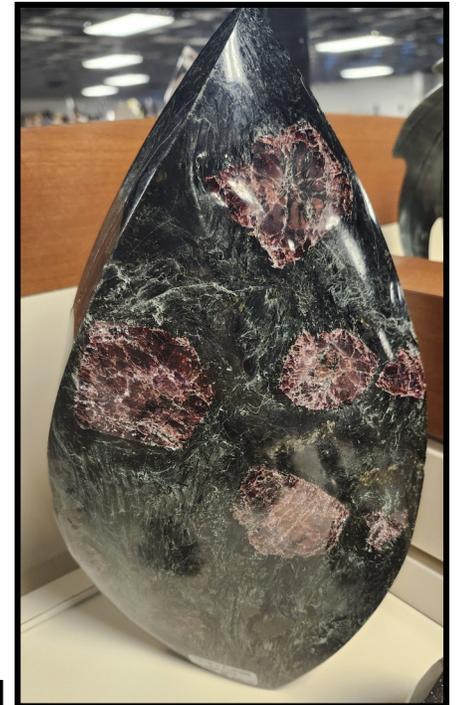


DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that bismuth is the heaviest stable element that is not toxic to humans? Unlike its periodic table neighbors, lead and polonium, bismuth is safe to handle and use. Historically, bismuth compounds have even been used in medicine, notably in Pepto-Bismol, to treat stomach ailments. Its non-toxic nature combined with its weight and density makes it an interesting and safe element to study and work with.



https://rockseeker.com/bismuth/?utm_source=convertkit&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=%E2%9B%8F%EF%B8%8F+Deep+green+to+shimmering+blue+and+red+-+18979131&sh_kit=48e500ff1ddff36b90e6ef9e704131ba2e89f68cc5222639453d32b31d29ce08



MORE PICTURES FROM THE AUSTIN GMS ANNUAL SHOW

Top left, Kyanite with calcite and quartz, Nature's Treasures; top center, Chrysocolla with Malachite, Congo, Vendor: Earths Fine Art, Austin GMS Annual Show; top right, polished amethyst geode, Austin GMS Annual Show; upper left amethyst 'cathedral', Nature's Treasures, where the SCFMS convention was held; upper center, Interior of one of the giant amethyst geodes with calcite inclusions, Nature's Treasures; upper right, garnet in fushite, Nature's Treasures; bottom left, Giant amethyst geode, Nature's Treasures; bottom center, fluorite, Guang Dong, He Yan, China, Vendor Earth's Fine Art, Austin GMS Annual Show. All photos by Susan Burch

Congratulations

2025 SCFMS EDITORS AND AUTHORS CONTEST WINNERS

2025 SCFMS EDITORS AND AUTHORS CONTEST WINNERS				
	CATEGORY:	LARGE BULLETINS		
PLACE	EDITOR	NAME OF BULLETIN	CLUB AFFILIATION	PUBLISHED
1st	Raymond Lynch	The Hot Springs Bulletin	The Hot Springs Geology Club	2/2024
2nd	Sarah Hawthorne and Julia Toombs	Rock N Rose	East Texas Gem and Mineral Society	1/2024
	CATEGORY:	MINI BULLETINS		
PLACE	EDITOR	NAME OF BULLETIN	CLUB AFFILIATION	MONTH PUBLISHED
1st	Susan Lovelace	The Rock Prattle	Tri-City Gem and Mineral Society	2024
	CATEGORY:	SPECIAL PUBLICATION		
PLACE	AUTHOR	NAME OF PUBLICATION	CLUB AFFILIATION	MONTH PUBLISHED
1	David Farhie	Show Flier	Tri-City Gem and Mineral Society	5/2024
	CATEGORY:	ORIGINAL ADULT ARTICLE		
PLACE	AUTHOR	NAME OF ARTICLE	CLUB AFFILIATION	MONTH PUBLISHED
1	Julia Toombs	The Meaning of Time	East Texas Gem and Mineral Society	4/2024
2	Ruth Rolston	Am I Who I Say I Am?	Tri-City Gem and Mineral Society	4/2024
3	David Farhie	Deer Hearts, Devil's Toenails, and Baby Butts	Tri-City Gem and Mineral Society	12/2024
	CATEGORY:	DRAWN FEATURE		
PLACE	AUTHOR	NAME OF FEATURE	CLUB AFFILIATION	MONTH PUBLISHED
1	Sarah Hawthorn	Tourmaline	East Texas Gem and Mineral Society	12/2024
	CATEGORY:	WRITTEN FEATURE		
PLACE	AUTHOR	NAME OF FEATURE	CLUB AFFILIATION	MONTH PUBLISHED
1	Carl Siggelow	Hogeye Paleo Paydirt	East Texas Gem and Mineral Society	5/2024
2	Allen Brown	Report on Rock & Mineral Presentation to First Graders	East Texas Gem and Mineral Society	2/2024
3	Ruth Rolston	Cowboy Lesson for July	Tri-City Gem and Mineral Society	7/2024
4	Julia Toombs	Texas Through Time (and Space)	East Texas Gem and Mineral Society	4/2024
5	Rick Walker	Permian Era Fossil Field Trip	East Texas Gem and Mineral Society	10/2024
6	Alan Walker	Digging Deeper	East Texas Gem and Mineral Society	5/2024
7	Colleen Hayes	Digging for Crystals	East Texas Gem and Mineral Society	1/2024
8	Terry Roberts	Shop Time	East Texas Gem and Mineral Society	1/2024
	CATEGORY:	ADULT POETRY		
PLACE	AUTHOR	NAME OF POEM	CLUB AFFILIATION	MONTH PUBLISHED
1	Susan Lovelace	The Stone	Tri-City Gem & Mineral Society	8/2024
2	Stephanie Blandin	Geodes	The Hot Springs Geology Club	2/2024



GOT A SECOND?
**Ellery Borow, AFMS Safety
 Chair**



Ellery Borow
AFMS Safety Chair

Perhaps to clarify, this second is not a second as a fraction of a minute, but a second person or a back-up person. The question being addressed here is whether or not one has a back-up plan, a second person to assist where needed.

We have a hobby filled with creativity, exploring collecting sites, building better gem and mineral shows, teaching others, encouraging new members and many, many other activities. We also tend to push our limits, try new things, do our best, and reach farther than we did yesterday. If we feel we have planned sufficiently well, we are willing to take a few more risks, and this is the place to seriously consider having seconds with us, or nearby.

It has long been known to go rock collecting with a second person as a just-in-case back-up person. To have a second person help us with a heavy lift. To have a second person hold the ladder as we install the club banner at a show. As we push our limits, it would be wise to also consider the wisdom of having a second person with us, or nearby, as a measure to insure a successful outcome.

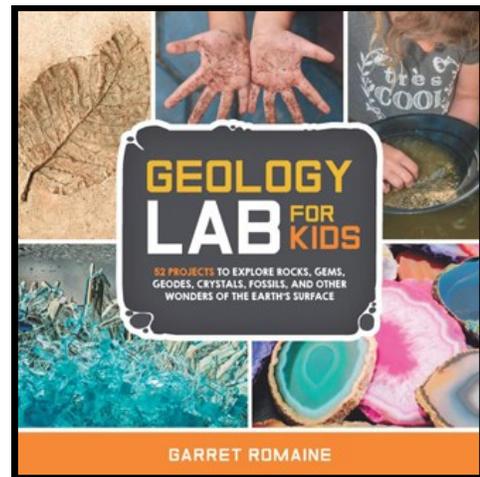
When we break or lose our glasses, it is wise to have a second person who can read the information on the bottles of our medications. A second person is helpful when we grab our chest during the too-steep hike up the hill to the mine. A second person is helpful to look in on us when we have tripped and fallen in the lapidary shop. A second person is helpful to navigate as we drive to a confusing destination. There are countless instances where having the aid of a second person can be a life-saving, time-saving, effort-saving or a reputation-saving presence. As we push ourselves to do more, be more, reach more, take more risks, having that second person is even more important.

Think of that person with a sudden and violent allergy reaction - having that second person can be vital in saving seconds (the time ones) to dig through car, truck, back pack or medical kits to locate that all-important rescue medication. It is the wise thing, the safe thing, the important thing to have a second (or more) person with one to keep the hobby the great one we share together.

One more important thing to consider is that having a second person with us permits us to share our hobby with another person - and that is a substantial and enjoyable part of our grand hobby- that of sharing it with others.

Please consider that your safety matters, as does that of the seconds (the persons with us.)

From AFMS Newsletter — October 2025



Reprinted with permission from Author, Garret Romaine. Please, include the link below.

<https://www.amazon.com/Garret-Romaine/e/B0037187T8>



**Play with tiny bits of steel and a magnet
 to show the North and South Poles.**



MATERIALS

- Iron filings or very fine steel wool
- Scissors
- Small (less than 20 ounces [591 ml]) clear plastic bottle, empty and clean
- Small test tube or plastic tube that fits in the top of your bottle
- Duct tape
- Magnets



Continued on Page 14

Continued from Page 13



Safety Tips

- Use caution when using scissors to make your own iron filings.



Creative Enrichment

You can use magnetic black sands instead of iron filings.



PROTOCOL

STEP 1: If you don't have iron filings, take very fine steel wool and cut it up into extremely tiny pieces with scissors.

STEP 2: Remove any labels from your empty plastic bottle. Most water bottles will work. You may need a little rubbing alcohol to get the glue from the label off the bottle.

STEP 3: Add enough filings or cut steel wool to the bottle to fill it about one-fifth of the way—just less than a quarter.

STEP 4: Insert the test tube into the bottle and see how much space you have between the glass and the plastic bottle.

Remove it and add enough tape to make a nice, snug fit. Fully reinsert the test tube and slide your magnets back in. Put the cap on the bottle if you can or tape the top to avoid a mess.

STEP 5: Now you can play with the bottle. Try rolling it on its side so that the filings attract to the magnet. What do you see?

THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE FUN

Like the Earth, magnets work by creating a magnetic field with lines of force that come out of the North Pole and enter through the South Pole. The atoms in the magnet are all lined up the same, with the North Pole and South Pole always pointed in the same direction. In iron, the atoms aren't lined up, and point in all directions. Opposites attract: a North Pole of a magnet will attract a South Pole, but if you try to push two poles together that are the same, they will repel each other.

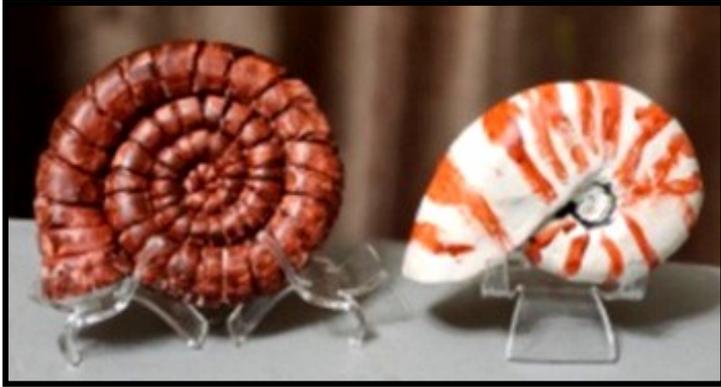
Magnetism is invisible, but the iron filings show you what the magnetic fields look like. The Earth works the same way, with a North Pole at the top, in the Arctic, and a South Pole at the bottom, in the Antarctic. When you lower your magnet into the test tube, the iron in the

bottle jumps to the magnet and each small piece points in the same direction as the magnet. You can see the magnetic poles in 3D thanks to the bottle, and you should see little spikes at the poles. Once you remove the magnet, the iron will return to its normal state.

Geologists have learned that the Earth's magnetic field sometimes reverses itself, so that the North Pole is on the bottom. When NASA checked the regular lava flows that erupt along the ocean bottom, they found that iron in the rocks was frozen into place as the lava cooled. They learned that every 200,000 years, the Earth's poles flip. The flipping doesn't appear to hurt anything, which is essential. If we didn't have a magnetic field around the Earth, the sun's radiation would blast away our atmosphere.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AMMONITES & NAUTILUSES

Lunnella Duffy, age 10, Indian Mounds Rock and Mineral Club, Michigan



Have you ever wondered what the difference is between a nautilus and an ammonite? Or maybe you are wondering what they are? Or when they lived? Well, to figure out answers to these questions just keep reading. So, if we look at them, nautiluses and ammonites have many differences, yet they have more similarities than differences.

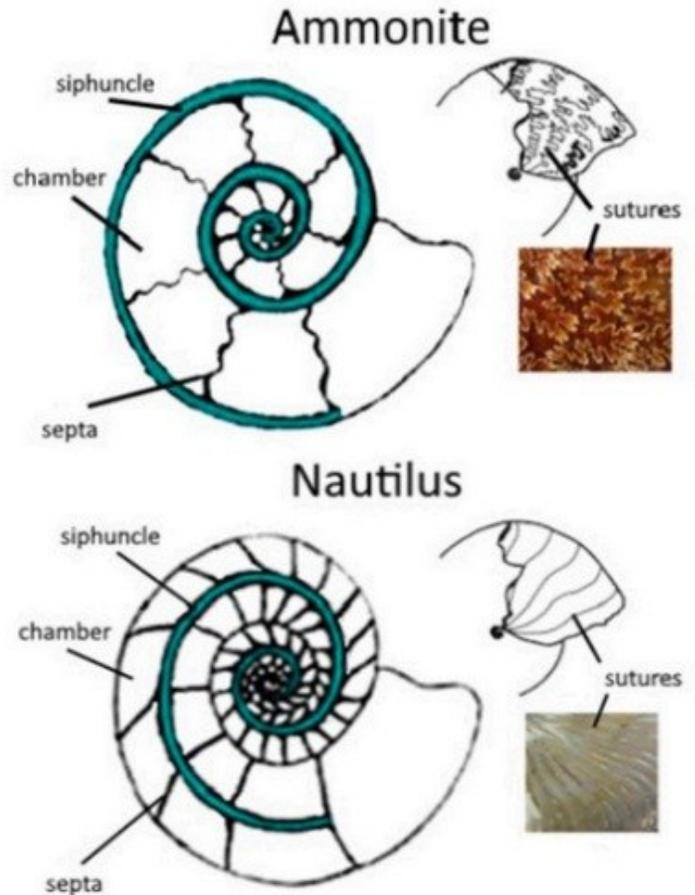
Before we keep going, why don't we learn about what they are? They are both ancient, squid-like, sea creatures that lived in a shell. Their scientific classification is cephalopod. This means that they are related to today's squid, octopus, and cuttlefish. So, you might think they are related to snails, but really, they aren't!

We just say ammonites and nautiluses, but really there were so many different species that lived in all the ancient oceans. So, we don't know exactly what ammonites ate, but we do know this: modern nautiluses eat fish and small crustaceans by using their arms to pull their food to their beak. Yeah, you heard me right. Ammonites and nautiluses have beaks, but although they are like bird beaks, they do have some differences. Bird beaks are made of bone, but cephalopod beaks are made of keratin. And for those who don't know what keratin is, it is the same stuff your hair and fingernails are made of.

Since they are both cephalopods and eat the same way, we think they might both have had the same diet. Nautiluses and ammonites are both cephalopods that lived in oceans all around the world, and they most likely were both carnivores. So, we talked about what they were like. Now we are going to talk about the differences in their shells and their shape. The first nautiluses started out straight but then as they evolved, they turned into spirals like the ones that live to this day. The first ammonites were originally spiral, but as they started evolving, they started getting funky shapes, such as knots and paper clip shapes.

The siphuncle was a tube that helped with buoyancy. Buoyancy is the ability to float. By adding or removing gas to the shell, it makes them float higher or sink lower. A nautilus siphuncle ran through the middle of the shell. An ammonite siphuncle ran along the outer shell.

Both start with a tiny shell and as they grow, they make a new chamber and close off the old one. The walls between the chambers are called septa. The sutures are lines created where the septa touch the shell. In nautiluses the suture lines are mostly straight but just slightly curved toward the opening, but ammonite sutures are wiggly and bumpy. Now you know how to tell the difference between nautiluses and ammonites by their siphuncle and suture lines.



Adapted from Parcha, S. K., <http://egyankosh.ac.in//handle/123456789/69625>,

and Santo, B., <https://natmus.humboldt.edu/exhibits/fossil-focus-exhibits/what-ammonite>

Joke break: What did the nautilus say to the clam that wouldn't share his lunch? Finish reading to find out the answer to the joke.

Continued from Page 13



Lunnella with an ammonite on the left and a nautilus on the right.

So, you know that nautiluses and ammonites lived together, but have you ever wondered which one appeared first?

Well, if we look at a timeline, we can see that nautiluses appeared in the late Cambrian Period about 488 to 500 million years ago. When they first appeared, nautiluses were straight as we talked about earlier. But did you know that the popular fossil *Orthoceras* is actually a cousin of nautilus.

Yeah, it is shocking! I was shocked, too, when I figured it out. So, every time you look at an *Orthoceras* you know that you are looking at a cousin of the nautilus.

If we look at when nautiluses first started coiling, that was in the Ordovician Period, 488 to 443 million years ago. And then they coiled and started to look like today's nautilus in the Devonian period, 416 to 259 million years ago. By now you might be wondering, when did ammonites come into the nautiluses' lives? Well, they started appearing around the same time that nautiluses started to look like the ones today.

Then 350 million years later ammonites died off during the mass extinction of the dinosaurs, 66 million years ago. But thankfully, nautiluses survived. Scientists think that it was because ammonites lived in shallower water and nautiluses lived in deeper water. The shallow swimming ammonites were more vulnerable to the planetary effects of the mass extinction than the deep-sea nautiluses, causing ammonites to die off but nautiluses to live.

So now you know all about what nautiluses and ammonites were like, what they ate, how they were different, when they lived and when they died. And if you are ever interested in a craft, then look at the recipe in the link below. You can make your own ammonite or nautilus out of salt dough. You can paint it, or you can decorate it too. I even made their soft bodies out of modeling clay in my models. You can look up what colors scientists thought they were, or you can just get creative! Oh, and if you like poetry then you can read the poem, "The Nautilus and the Ammonite" by George F. Richardson.

Joke answer: You're shell-fish.

"How to make a salt dough ammonite fossil" article by The Natural History Museum, London, UK

<https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/how-to-make-a-salt-dough-ammonite-fossil.html>

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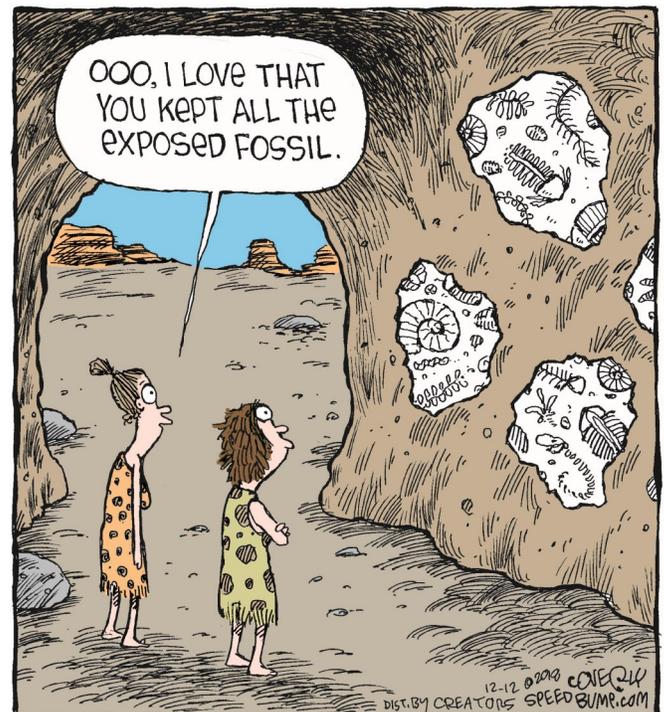
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From AFMS September, 2025. (I could not get the links to work, SB)



HOUSTON GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY

72nd Annual Gem, Mineral, Jewelry & Fossil Show



Fluorite
Diana Maria Mine, Weardale Co.
Durham, England
Photo by Steve Blyskal

Nov 7 - 9, 2025

HUMBLE CIVIC CENTER

Tickets \$12

Good for all 3 days,
kids 10 & under get in free
(Purchase early online or
in-person at the show)

hgms.org
facebook.com/hgms.org
instagram.com/hgms.org_tx

Grand Prize DGMS 68th Annual Gem & Mineral Show

Amethyst Geode with metal base

12x24.5 59.4 lbs



November 22 -23, 2025

Saturday 10a - 6p & Sunday 10a to 5p

Mesquite Convention Center

1700 Rodeo Dr. MesquiteTX (I635 Military Parkway exit 4)

Adults – \$8, Kids to 12 – \$4, Family of 4 – \$20
Veterans, Teachers, and those over 65 (w/ID)- \$5
Free admission for Scouting programs (in uniform)

*Silent Auction - Raffles – Kids Area –
Cabbing Demonstrations - UV Tent - and
MORE!*

Facebook/DallasGemandMineralSociety
<https://dallasgemandmineral.org>

Parking will be free with
QR registration code.
Come to the payment
desk to get the free
parking QR code.





HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT...CHRYSOCOLLA

1. What is the primary mineral responsible for the blue color in chrysocolla?

- A) Magnesium
- B) B) Iron
- C) Copper
- D) Zinc

2. What is the rare, highly valuable form of chrysocolla known as?

- A) Gem silica
- B) Chalcedony chrysocolla
- C) Chrysocolla quartz
- D) Botryoidal chrysocolla

3. What test can you use to check if chrysocolla has been stabilized with resin or epoxy?

- A) Magnet test
- B) Scratch test
- C) Water immersion test
- D) Heat pin test

4. Chrysocolla often co-occurs with which other copper-bearing minerals?

- A) Calcite and gypsum
- B) Malachite and azurite
- C) Hematite and magnetite
- D) Quartz and feldspar

5. **True or False:** Chrysocolla can transform into malachite or azurite due to changes in oxidation levels and moisture.

Find the answers in the article linked below, or cheat and go to page 18.

Ultimate Guide To Chrysocolla (And Where To Find It!) <https://rockseeker.com/chrysocolla/>

CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME!

SCFMS exists for the benefit of our member clubs and we are all volunteers. Please consider enriching our club by making a photo, drawing, or written contribution to the newsletter about a geology or earth science related topic.

Pick a topic that interests you and give it a go. Please send it me at scfmseditor@yahoo.com by the 20th of the month prior to the expected publication date and I would be glad to work with you to finalize your item for this newsletter.

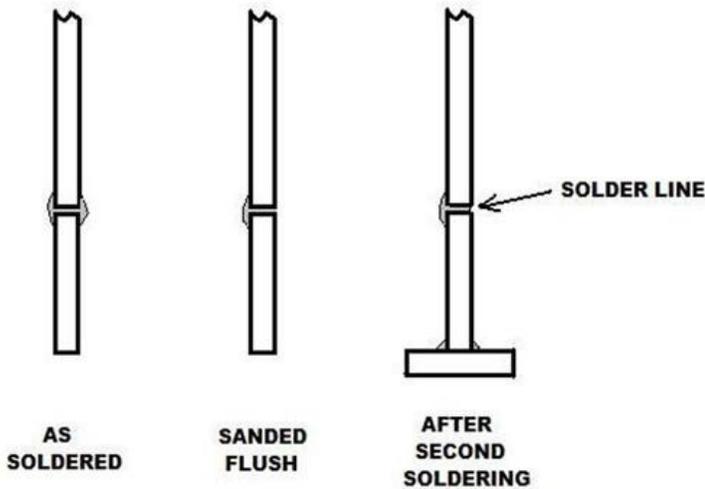
Please, be sure to send me your show flyer at least several months in advance so, I can share it in our newsletter.

Susan Burch, Editor

**DEADLINE
FOR THE
JANUARY-
FEBRUARY, 2026
NEWSLETTER IS
DECEMBER 20, 2025**

BENCH TIPS BY BRAD SMITH

AVOIDING SOLDER LINES



After finishing a soldered joint on say a bezel, have you ever seen it reappear after you've soldered the bezel to a base plate? What's happening is that every time you heat a soldered piece to the temperature that solder flows, the liquid solder seeps a little more into the surrounding metal. This leaves a small furrow where the solder had been sanded off flush at the joint. To get rid of the furrow, you have to re-sand the joint area down to the bottom of the furrow.

To avoid this when I have another soldering operation to follow, I try to leave a little extra solder on my joints. For instance, when trimming off excess base plate from around a bezel, I leave a paper thickness of excess plate material whenever possible until I'm done with all the soldering.

Of course, this isn't always possible like when a soldering operation prevents you from gaining access to an area for final sanding and polishing. Coating the finished solder joint with ochre seems to help a bit but is not a complete solution.

LOOSE HEADS

Flying off the handle is never good, particularly if it's a hammerhead. The traditional way to tighten a loose hammerhead is a bit of work with wedges, but if the head is basically secure, there's a fast and easy way to tighten a loose head for about 50 cents - superglue.

Simply put a couple drops in from the handle side, let it set up, and then a few drops from the top side. Be sure to get the thin super glue, not gel. It penetrates better. Packages of superglues are usually available at the 99 cent store.

Note that this is only a safe practice if the hammer head is just a little loose but is basically secured onto the handle. Gluing is not a fix for a hammerhead that has come off the handle or is at risk of coming off.



Making jewelry involves a multitude of skills, intricate hand work, and a lot of problem solving. In this book series find help to:

- Broaden your metalworking skills
- Improve productivity at the bench
- Save money on tools and supplies

See Other Tips in my Smart Solutions for Jewelry Making Problems
<http://amazon.com/dp/B0BQ8YVLTJ>

Happy hammering,
 - Brad Smith

Please, check out more Smart Solutions for Your Jewelry Making Problems

[Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith](https://www.amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith)



UPCOMING SHOWS 2025/2026

NOVEMBER

November 1-2, Paleontological Society of Austin, Old Settler's Heritage Association,
<https://www.austinpaleo.org/fest.html>

November 1-2, Midland Gem and Mineral Society, Bush Convention Center,
<https://www.midlandgemandmineral.org/>

November 7-9, Houston Gem and Mineral Society, Humble Convention Center, <https://hgms.org/>

November 8-9, Golden Spread Gm, Mineral & Treasure Society, Amarillo Civic Center
<https://goldenspreadgemmineraltreasuresociety.com/>

November 15-16, Fort Worth G&M Club, May 24 - 25, Will Rogers Memorial Center,
<https://www.fortworthgemandmineralclub.org/show.html>

November 15-16, Southwest Gem and Mineral Society, San Antonio Garden Center <http://www.swgms.org/>

November 22-23, Dallas Gem and Mineral Society, Mesquite Convention Center,
<https://www.dallasgemandmineral.org/>

DECEMBER

December 6-7, DeRidder Gem and Mineral Society, West LA Forestry Fair Grounds,
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064473110778>

JANUARY

January 17-18, Fredericksburg Rockhounds, Lady Bird Johnson Park-Pioneer Pavillion
<http://fredericksburgrockhounds.org/>

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C.) Copper

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D) Heat pin test

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B) Malachite and azurite

5. True or False: Chrysocolla can transform into malachite or azurite due to changes in oxidation levels and moisture.

True



To those who helped make this issue possible...

Don Shurtz
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 Rockseeker.com
 Elery Borow
 Garret Romaine
 Lunnella Duffy
 Brad Smith