MARCH-APRIL, 2026

NEWSLETTER OF THE

SOUTH CENTRAL FEDERATION

Of Mineral Societies

Member of: The American Federation of Mineral Societies

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

SOUTH CENTRAL FEDERATION OF MINERAL SOCIETIES, INC.

2026 SCFMS OFFICERS

President: Sigrid Stewart

Executive V-P: Rick Price

Secretary: Vacant

Treasurer: Henry Rojas

Web Master: Mike Smith

Exec. Secretary: Susan Burch

AFMS Endowment Fund Raffle for SCFMS: Walt Beneze

SCFMS Endowment Fund Treasurer: Walt Beneze

Nominating Committee – Ron Carman

Past President: Don Shurtz

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

In most instances, material in this newsletter may be duplicated for non-commercial purposes providing full credit is given. There are exceptions, please do not assume permissions. For Commercial use, the individual author(s) must be contacted for their approval.

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
November 13-15
Hosted by Houston G&MS

ANNUAL MEETING
NOVEMBER 14, 2026

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

President's Message

By Sigrid Stewart, SCFMS President

IN PRAISE OF FIELD TRIPS

For rockhounds, almost nothing beats arriving in a new location, armed with buckets and collecting tools, ready to find out what the area offers! Even if you are an experienced collector with a garage full of great finds, it almost doesn't matter what or where, because *you are outside collecting rocks!* It's like the first day of school, the first day of skiing or the first day back to the beach after a long winter. We are talking about JOY!

Finding locations for field trips is becoming more difficult for many clubs. It is a huge problem in Texas where I live because there is so little public land. There are liability issues and past abuses to deal with. Owners of locations on private land are under no obligation to host you and your club members, and some have bad memories of folks who left holes unfilled, gates unclosed, and trash on their land. We need to improve the public perception of rockhounds by behaving like we want people to act in our own homes and yards.

On public lands there may be regulations to contend with. Laws prohibiting the collecting of vertebrate fossils have had rangers with binoculars scanning for commercial and individual collectors hoping to score a piece of dino bone. Sharks' teeth, which can be found in many areas, are also vertebrate fossils, and hunters have had policemen ask to see if they have collected any.

Problems like these can only be overcome with local expertise. No one wants to go rock hunting and risk a vehicle impoundment or seizure (which has happened on some federal land), and it is local people who have sussed out the local rules and regulations and researched the risks. If you can find private landowners willing to permit rockhounding, SCFMS can help with liability insurance for the landowner for field trips.

Back to local… what we need is more field trips! I can't think of anything more likely to attract new members to our clubs, and which would also be fun for existing members. To promote this, some members of the Austin Club suggested that each member club sponsor a trip once a year to which they would be willing to invite other SCFMS club's members.

We could post general details (not precise locations and times) about those trips on the SCFMS website, and schedule at appropriate times to increase the number of field trips available to our members.

I know the answer for the Houston Gem & Mineral Society. It would be Whiskey Bridge, on the Brazos River not too far from Houston. That site has its own problems; steep muddy trails, occasional high water, reptiles and mosquitos. But this is a place where you can find Eocene fossils. Certainly, many fossil hunters already know about this site, but it's fun to go on field trips with friends, and good to have activities for new rockhounds, young and old.

What trips could your club sponsor?

COMMON MINERALS

By Sigrid Stewart

Sigrid Stewart, SCFMS President

What kind of minerals can you find on field trips? Every region has its specialties, but many of the most beloved mineral species seem to come from mines in exotic locations – places you are not likely to have a chance of visiting. However, if you like to travel around, poking into road cuts and old mineral collecting locations, eventually you realize that you can find some minerals in many different places. These are the common minerals that make up most of the crust of the Earth.

A mineral is a solid which is:

- Inorganic.
- Occurs naturally.
- Crystalline.
- Has a consistent chemical composition.

Geologists have identified more than 4,000 minerals, but only 20 or so of these can be considered common rock-forming minerals. Silicate minerals make up 96% of Earth's crust. Non-silicate minerals account for the other 4%.

I have been doing a series of short talks for the Mineral Section of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society based on those Common Minerals, in part because you can easily go find them, and also in part because listening to a group of experienced collectors talking about the rare minerals in their collections is a little daunting for people new to the hobby. My husband Steve and I have gone through our shelves and brought specimens to meetings because people want to see them and hold them in their hands. A photograph can only do so much for you, and museums don't usually let you touch! It engages your senses to observe the metallic luster on a pyrite outside in the morning sunshine or to hold a barite specimen in your hand to feel its weight. How about gypsum crystals that you can scratch with your fingernail? These specimens may not wow attendees of the Tucson Show but I will bet most of you remember the quartz or gypsum crystals you first found and how much fun it was!

In the last few months, we have covered:
Introduction to Feldspar (both Plagioclase and Alkali Feldspars, Calcite, Pyrite, Quartz, Garnet, Gypsum, Fluorite, Barite, and Celestine.

Here's a condensed example, for **Calcite**:
Carbonate minerals, those containing a carbonate group (CO_3), include calcite, $CaCO_3$ and dolomite, $CaMg(CO_3)_2$. Aragonite is a polymorph of Calcite, with slightly different properties; it does not have rhombic cleavage as calcite does. Both Aragonite and Dolomite alter to Calcite over time.

Properties of Minerals	Special Properties of Calcite
Color	Almost any color, transparent to opaque
Streak	White
Luster	Vitreous, waxy, pearly, resinous, or dull
Cleavage and Fracture	Perfect cleavage in 3 directions, rhombic
Hardness	Mohs Hardness 3
Crystal Shape	Trigonal system; many different shapes
Density	2.71 g/cm3
Response to acid	Effervesces

Fluorescence and Phosphorescence	Can be fluorescent or phosphorescent
Chatoyancy and Asterism	Can be chatoyant
Double Refraction	Can display double refraction
Magnetism	No
Radioactivity	Can contain radioactive isotope Carbon 14

Calcite and aragonite are very important to life on Earth, because so many invertebrates grow shells and other hard parts using calcite and aragonite. With time, the result is limestone, and after metamorphosis, marble.
Common Calcite crystal shapes are rhombohedral and scalenohedral, but may also be tabular, acicular, prismatic or needle-like. Calcite belongs to the trigonal (rhombohedral) crystal system, characterized by its distinct rhombohedral shape and three perfect cleavage directions.
Iceland Spar, a very clear form of calcite, was used for bomb sights during World War II, and for optics in polarizing microscopes. It was probably used for navigation by the Vikings to determine the location of the sun on cloudy days.
Calcite is used in cement, plaster of Paris, sheetrock, antacids for upset stomachs, and for many other agricultural and industrial uses.
Manganoan calcite (Ca,Mn) CO_3 forms a solid solution series with Rhodochrosite, varying from pink to red with increasing saturation. It can be fluorescent and even phosphorescent.
We cover topics like crystal structure, testing of minerals, density and specific gravity, refraction and fluorescence.

Continued on Page 6

Continued from Page 5

References:
https://rhs.rocklinusd.org/subsites/Geology/documents/CHAPTER%205%20MINERALS%20OF%20THE%20EARTH-S%20CRUST.pdf
https://commonminerals.esci.umn.edu/minerals-f/calcite-and-aragonite
https://www.nevadamining.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Density2rev_2.pdf
https://naturalhistory.si.edu/explore/collections/geogallery/10026196
https://www.rockngem.com/calcite-identification-guide/

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY WAS MARCH 8, 2026
By Susan Burch

Susan Burch
SCFMS Editor

As International Women's Day has just passed, I thought I would include links to an article that interested me. Along with my love of rocks, I also enjoy reading about other periods of history, including the writing, poetry, and daily life.

Recently, I was exploring Rock & Gem Magazine's online offerings. In their digital library, there is an issue which concentrates on Celebrating Rockhounding Women, you can find it here listed as 2024 edition. (www.rockngem.com/digital-issue-library/) You may have to enter your name and email to access these free issues.

The article that I spoke of is titled 'The Resilient Revival of Anne Brontë & Her Stones', by L. A. Sokolowski, which is found on pages 27-30. One of her quotes cited is

"You can not expect stone to be as pliable as clay."
~Anne Brontë

The article goes into some detail about her collection of stones at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. It reviews aspects of her comprehensive references to Natural History and Geology in her writing. The article also brings to light that she was sidelined for a long time in favor of her more famous sisters, Charlotte and Emily. However, the renewed interest in her brings forward that Anne's rock collecting is not really surprising in light of the Brontë family's interest in the Natural World.

FROM SCOTTISH GRANITE TO OLYMPIC GLORY: THE JOURNEY OF A CURLING STONE

By Susan Burch

When the Winter Olympics wrapped up this February, most of the headlines focused on the high-speed drama of skiing, skating, and snowboarding. But tucked among the marquee events was a sport built on precision rather than speed — curling. More than a hundred athletes from around the world stepped onto the ice with one essential tool: a 44-pound polished block of granite that had traveled farther than many of the competitors themselves.

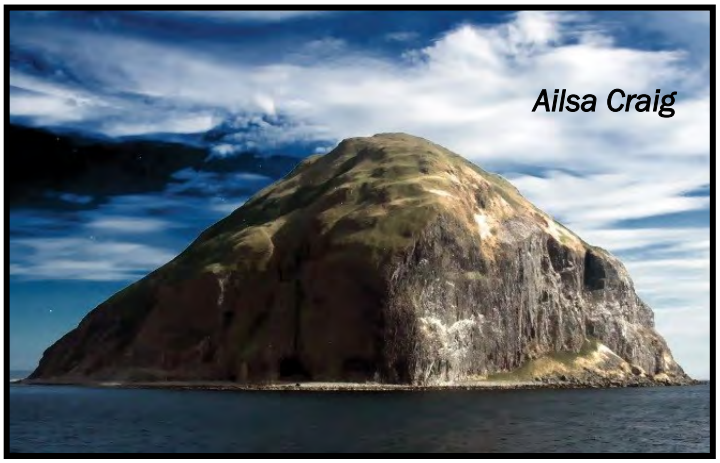
A Sport born on Frozen Scottish Waters—Curling's roots reach back more than five centuries. The earliest known stone is dated 1511, and by the mid-1500s, Scottish monks were already sliding rocks across frozen lochs in friendly competition. The sport spread through Europe, and by the 1700s, clubs began forming across Scotland. Still, it wasn't until 1838 that the first standardized rules were written.

Scottish emigrants carried the game abroad, introducing it to Canada, the United States, and parts of Europe. By 1959, the first world championship was held. Curling's global profile surged after it became an official Olympic medal sport in 1998, drawing new fans to its mix of strategy, finesse, and teamwork.

How the stones evolved—The earliest curling stones were simply rounded fieldstones fitted with iron handles.

As the sport matured, so did the equipment. By the mid-1800s, Scottish manufacturers were producing stones with consistent shapes and smooth, flat bases — a major step toward the current design.

Today's Olympic stones follow strict specifications: a maximum circumference of 36 inches, a minimum height of 4.5 inches, and a weight between 38 and 44 pounds. Each stone features a brightly colored handle attached through its center, allowing players to impart the subtle rotation that gives curling its name.



Two types of granite, from one tiny island—What makes a curling stone truly special is the material it's made from. Olympic stones rely on two rare granites found almost nowhere else on Earth — both quarried from Ailsa Craig, a rugged volcanic island off Scotland's Ayrshire coast.

- **Common Green granite** forms the main body of the stone. Its durability allows it to withstand repeated high-impact collisions without chipping.
- **Blue Hone granite** is used for the stone's base. Its dense, water-resistant structure prevents damage from constant freezing and thawing, preserving the narrow "running band" that actually contacts the ice.

Ailsa Craig itself is less than a square mile in size, but its geological makeup has made it legendary in the curling world. Over the centuries, it has served as a refuge, a lighthouse station, and now a protected wildlife haven — all while supplying the granite that fuels a global sport.

Crafted by Kays of Scotland— Only one company in the world produces Olympic-grade curling stones: Kays of Scotland. With exclusive rights to quarry Ailsa Craig granite, the firm harvests boulders roughly once a decade. Each stone begins as a thick slab cut with diamond-studded wires, then shaped, drilled, assembled, and polished through a meticulous process that blends craftsmanship with engineering.

Continued on Page 8

Continued from Page 7

Kays typically finishes about 40 stones a week, and each Olympic-quality stone carries a price tag approaching $1,000 — a testament to the precision required to meet international standards.

Why the sweeping matters—Anyone who watched curling during the Games saw the frantic sweeping that follows a sliding stone. This isn't theatrics — it's physics. Sweeping gently warms and smooths the ice, reducing friction and allowing players to fine-tune both the stone's speed and its curved path. In a sport where millimeters can decide a match, that control is everything.

References:

Curling Stones: Olympic Granite, *From Ailsa Craig to Olympic Ice by Steve Voynick*, which originally appeared in *Rock & Gem magazine*.

APPROACHES TO SAFETY
— Safety Matters by Ellery Borow

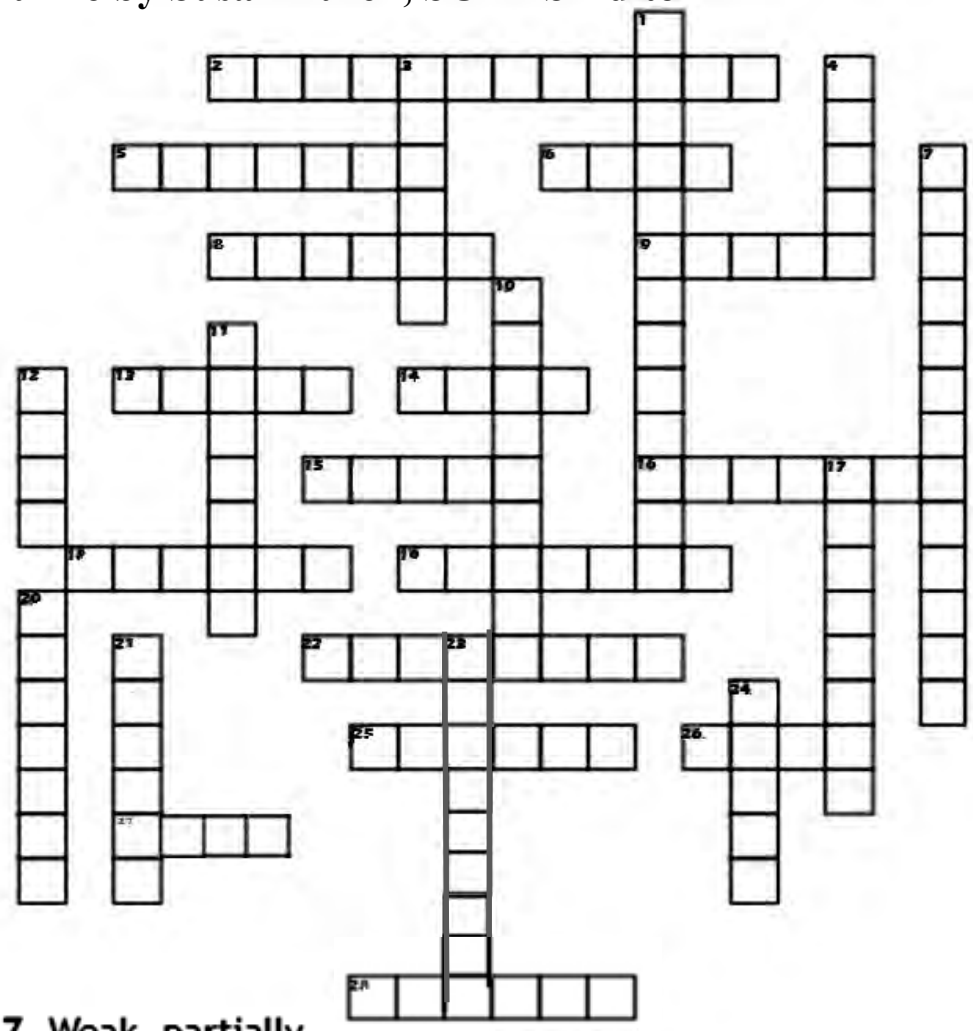
Ellery Borow, EFMLS Safety Chairperson

Perhaps you have seen, while traveling America's highways and byways, a big, red, octagon sign featuring the word "STOP" across its face. The operator of the vehicle approaching such a sign is required to bring their vehicle to a stop, assess the traffic situation, and properly enter the intersection controlled by the stop sign. That is the law, to bring the vehicle to a stop. There are legal repercussions if one does not stop. This is the first approach to safety — make it a law. A second approach to safety is a reaction to circumstances. Say there is a roadway intersection of a primary and two secondary roads controlled by stop signs on the secondary roads. I know of one such instance where the primary road crests a hill and is at a curve in the road as well. Needless to say, there were numerous accidents at that intersection. After many years of accidents at the intersection a traffic control light (red, yellow and green) was installed with a resulting reduction in accidents at the intersection. The last approach to safety is predictive. This is where no accident has been had as yet but as a just-in-case a safety rule is devised and applied. In such instances a town, state, governing board, or committee uses advisors to create a set of rules, laws or guidelines for such things as of use of a facility by the public. Such instances might be at public buildings, parks, playgrounds, public pools, or other public places. rules for use of the stage area? Are fall prevention barriers needed, or recommended, or not addressed? Do club members just need to be aware of the risks and take their own precautions? All through the rock and mineral clubs in our shared hobbies there are rules, guidelines, safety procedures, and common sense areas of safety concern. Some of those

Continued on Page 10

TUFF GEOLOGY

Crossword Puzzle by Susan Burch, SCFMS Editor



Across

2. Scientist who studies earthquakes

5. Wearing away of rock by wind or water

6. Mineral hardness scale creator

8. Layer where convection drives plate motion

9. Break in Earth's crust where movement occurs

13. Fragment of rock or mineral

14. Rock formed from compacted plant material

15. Solid aggregates of minerals

16. Rock formed from cooled magma or lava

18. Largest type of volcano, broad and gently sloping

19. Mountain-building process

22. Loose material deposited by wind, water, or ice

25. Dark volcanic rock

26. Molten rock on Earth's surface

27. Rock made of volcanic ash

28. Metamorphic rock with banding

Down

1. Process that turns sediment into rock

3. Layer of Earth beneath the crust

4. Earth's outermost solid layer

7. Weak, partially molten layer of the mantle

10. Boundary where two plates slide past each other

11. Ancient supercontinent

12. Natural underground chamber

17. Fine-grained volcanic glass

20. Mineral that fizzes in acid

21. Common mineral made of silicon dioxide

23. The Smithsonian _____ (Not the formal name, so as to fit the puzzle.)

24. Molten rock beneath Earth's surface

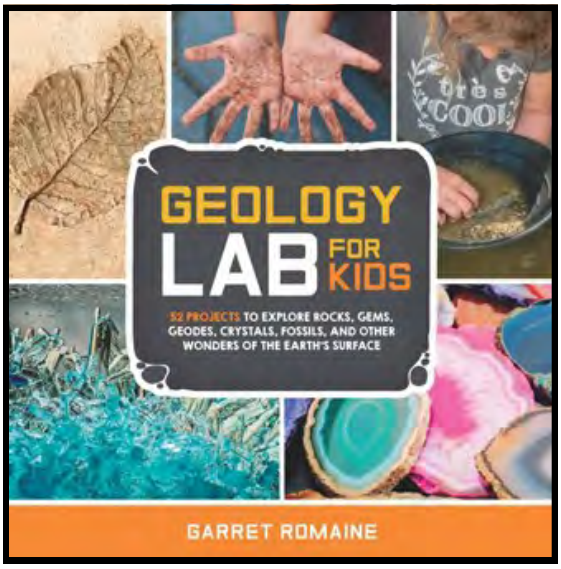
Solution on Page 12

Continued from Page 8

rules and guidelines may be unique to their club, their meeting hall, their club lapidary shop, their show facility, their field trips and so on. Some rules are law, some are practical guidelines, some common-sense wisdom, and some, while sounding reasonable may need to be, at times, questioned. What is a club to do in a world not necessarily obsessed with safety but surely concerned with being safe? A club might have a dedicated safety person for their show, their lapidary shop, and their field trip but most clubs appear for example to have the field trip chair also be their field trip safety chair, and so on. However, there is much more to a club than shows, workshops and field trips — there are also meetings, special programs, picnics, swaps and more. In addition, clubs also have their official keeper of the club's first responder kit with a basic emergency medical supply. Associated with that responsibility comes training and familiarity with use of those supplies. The shear amount of safety information needed for a club may make it difficult to have a safety chairperson to oversee each area where there are matters of safety. In smaller clubs it may be difficult to find any person to chair a separate safety committee let alone have dedicated people for specific concerns. The above instances were utilized as a common frame of reference. Most of our regular safety interactions are a mixture of approaches. Look both ways before crossing the road. Use pot holders to carry a hot cooking pot. Use the handrails when climbing stairs. In rock and mineral club activities there are also those mixed approaches to the rules. Public access building codes require emergency exits and stairs to be kept clear in case of an emergency at our shows. Yet part of that hall might have a raised area to use as a stage. If the stage is used for displays or dealers' tables, and the public has access to that stage, what measures are used to keep attendees from tripping and falling off the stage? What rules apply? Does that hall have There are many ways to address concerns of safety in clubs. A club may offer regular talks by professionals devoted to some aspect of safety such that safety becomes a shared club member responsibility. A club may offer to their members a yearly class for first responder/aid knowledge. Club members may be asked (or assigned) a safety topic and required to give a short talk on the matter before the club. Safety articles might be included in periodic editions of club newsletters. A club may offer a brief safety refresher talk before heading into each dig. A club may require safety lessons to each person using the club lapidary or jewelry shop. As a club sets up for a show the volunteers may be offered a safety talk of specific show activities (such as being cautious with folding table leg pinch points). A club may offer its own safety guideline book to new members. A club may decide to encode safety requirements into its by-laws (such as for age limits (if any) for participation in club field trips).

As each and every club has its own uniqueness — there are often times when its uniqueness in safety matters need be addressed. When there are questions or concerns there is a plethora of sources of reliable safety information on the internet and most libraries. Please take matters of safety as a serious matter and use discretion. Sharpening a pencil in a pencil sharpener probably does not need safety glasses in order to keep one's eyes safe. Sharpening a rock chisel on a metal grinding machine is very different matter, one where safety glasses are a good idea to be worn. Just like rules of the road, safety matters concern us all. Please be safe — your safety matters.

From EFMLS News, March 2026



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

https://www.amazon.com/Garret-Romaine/e/B0037I87T8

LAB 34

GUSHING GEYSERS

The classic "Mentos in a soda bottle" experiment shows one way geysers can work.

Continued on Page 11

Continued from Page 10

MATERIALS

- 2-liter bottle of diet cola at room temperature
- Sheet of paper, rolled into a tube to hold the candies
- 7 Mentos candies

Safety Tips

- Stand back! This lab can get messy!
- Avoid getting soda in your eyes.

PROTOCOL

STEP 1: Place the bottle of cola some where that is easy to wash down with a hose, such as a driveway.
STEP 2: Roll up the paper into a tube and insert the seven candies. Make sure the roll will guide the candies in quickly.
STEP 3: Place a finger over the bottom of the roll, and then position it over the soda bottle.
STEP 4: Release the candies and move away quickly.

Creative Enrichment

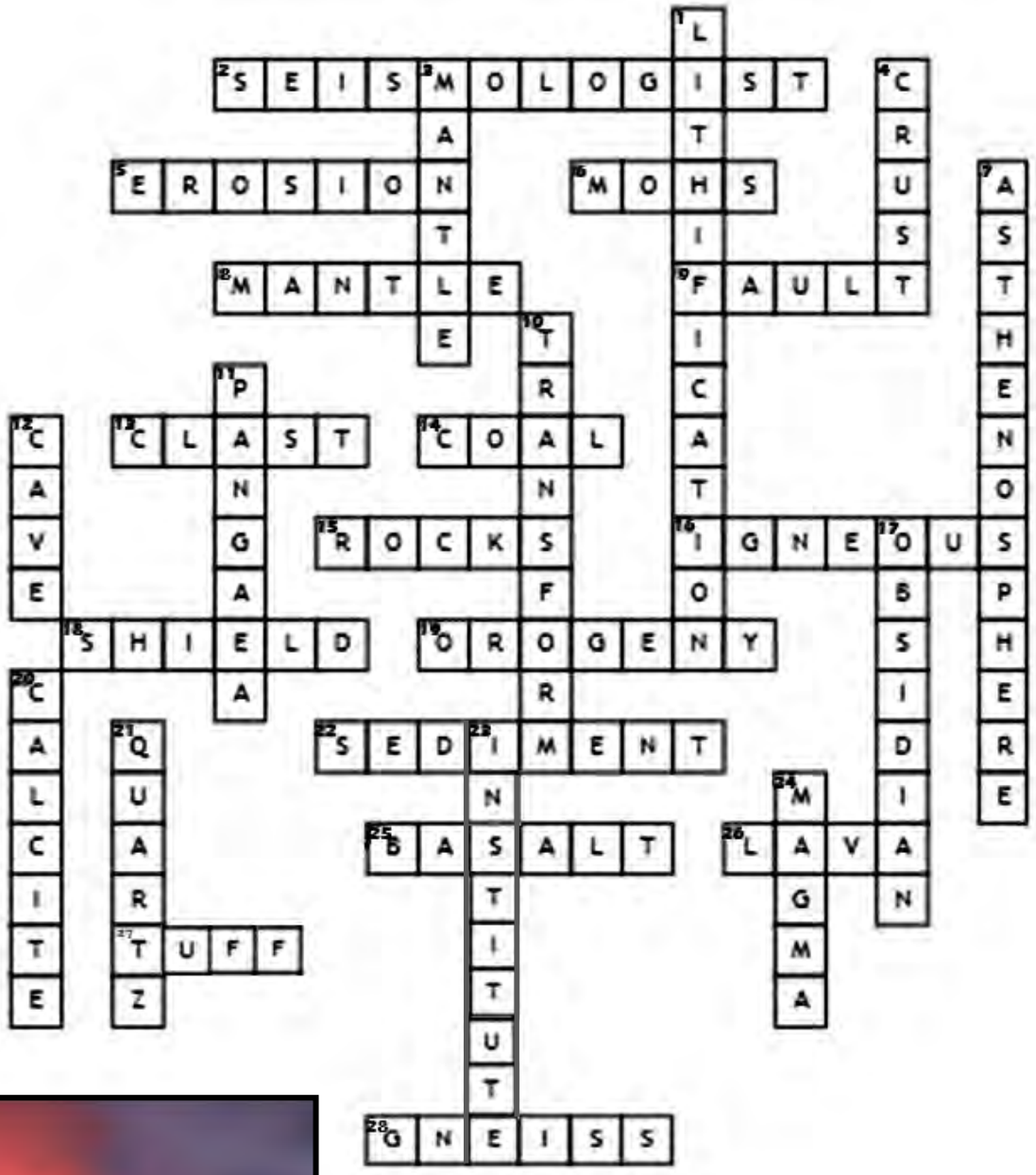
1. You can adjust many variables in this experiment—temperature, flavor, brand, number of candies, etc.—to see what produces the best geyser.
2. Check the surface of the candy with a hand lens—what does it look like? What would happen if you took fine sandpaper and smoothed out all those pits before you try this experiment?

THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE FUN

When you drop in your candy, the carbon dioxide in the soda is immediately attracted to the candy surface. Because of all those pits in the sugar, your candy has hundreds of places for the carbon dioxide to form bubbles. These are called nucleation sites. This is similar to the experiments you ran when you created crystals out of salt and sugar. Only instead of allowing the seed crystal to slowly build up the crystal structure , you are starting a violent reaction as more and more carbon dioxide releases from the diet soda. If the candy is smooth, there are far fewer places for the reaction to begin, and the results aren't as dramatic. Another factor to consider is the weight of the candies—they are heavy enough to sink in the soda bottle and find more carbon dioxide to liberate.

If you use plain soda water instead of diet cola, you also get less action. Diet drinks have less surface tension, thanks to the artificial sweeteners, so there is less force to hold the soda together. If you imagine a large chamber of hot magma just below the surface, when the pressure is suddenly released, you don't get lava—you get an eruption of ash. There is enough air rushing in to mix with the magma and it turns into an ash cloud, rather than a lava flow. Real geysers, such as Old Faithful at Yellowstone National Park, operate somewhat differently. Hot groundwater in a large void heats up rapidly to a boil, and then begins to rise quickly. If you were to try to conduct an experiment like that, it would be very dangerous and not nearly as much fun.

TUFF GEOLOGY —Crossword Puzzle Solution



ACROSS:

2. Seismologist
5. Erosion
6. Mohs
8. Mantle
9. Fault
13. Clast
14. Coal
15. Rocks
16. Igneous
18. Shield
19. Orogeny
22. Sediment
25. Basalt
26. Lava
27. Tuff
28. Gneiss

DOWN:

1. Lithification
3. Mantle
4. Crust
7. Asthenosphere
10. Transform
11. Pangaea
12. Cave
17. Obsidian
20. Calcite
21. Quartz
23. Institute *
24. Magma

* The formal name is The Smithsonian Institution

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 25th 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 MAY-JUNE, 2026 NEWSLETTER IS APRIL 25, 2026

BENCH TIPS

BY BRAD SMITH

BEZEL PROBLEMS

Brad Smith

When bezel setting a cab that has rather sharp corners, have you ever had a problem pushing the metal down at the corners? It's a common problem often causing a wrinkle in your bezel and a grimace on your face.

In order for a bezel to capture the stone, the top edge of the bezel must be compressed and become shorter to lay down onto the stone. With a round or oval stone this naturally happens as you push and burnish the bezel. But when setting a stone with corners, the tendency is to push the long sides of the bezel down first. No compression occurs along the sides, and all excess metal is left at the corners. Compressing everything there is difficult. Often the only way to remove the extra metal at the corner is to make a saw cut and fold the two sides in to touch.

If you want a smooth bezel all around the corners, the simple solution is to set the corners of the bezel first. Then push in and burnish the sides. In this way the necessary compression is distributed along the length of all sides and not forced to occur at the corners. With the corners set first, the top edge of the bezel can easily be compressed along the sides.

CHEAPER & BETTER PICKLE

Most jewelers use a granular pickle mixed with water. The active ingredient is sodium bisulfate. This can be purchased online (amazon.com/dp/B084GPS6KR) or from local stores as a common pool chemical like pH Down used for adjusting the acidity of the water. Check the list of active ingredients for a brand that is 95% or more sodium bisulfate.

An added benefit is that the pool chemical is usually more pure in form than what is sold for jewelry use and does not cause the brown grime often found floating on the top of the pot.

Continued on Page 14

Continued from Page 14

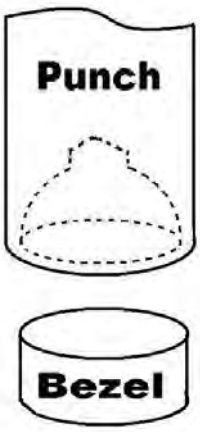
BENCH SHEARS

When cutting sheet metal, it's quicker and easier to use a set of shop shears as compared with using a hand saw. The cut is not as precise, but many times you don't need that. Shears will easily cut up to 24 gauge sheet, and some will cut 22 or even 20 gauge.

Current prices for shears run from $13 - $36 in jewelry catalogs, and the Joyce Chen scissors recommended on some jewelry blogs run more than $20. But I found cheaper alternatives at the 99 Cent Store for use in my classes. They're great for cutting bezels, trimming around a bezel cup and cutting a piece off a larger sheet.

BEZEL CLOSER

A bezel closer is a steel punch that makes quick work out of pushing the metal down over a round stone and burnishing it. It works with regular bezels, with tube settings, and with prong settings. Stones can be set in as little as 30 seconds.



The working end is a concave cavity that fits over the bezel or prong setting and is pushed and twisted to capture the stone. Sets can be purchased but are expensive and contain many sizes you will probably never use. If all you need is one or two sizes, here's how you can make them yourself.

Find a round steel rod or bolt a little larger in diameter than your bezel cup or prong setting. Cut a 5 inch length. File both ends flat. Locate the center of one end, centerpunch a divot, and drill a small pilot hole about 5 mm deep. Remember to use a little oil as lubricant when cutting steel.

Select a ball bur a bit larger than the bezel. Enlarge the pilot hole to a full hemispherical cavity. Test for proper fit with your bezel. Bezel should first contact the cavity about a third of the way in. When the size is correct, polish the cavity using Zam on a length of chopstick in your flex shaft. If the tool is not polished, it will leave scratches on your bezel or prongs.

When using the tool, the first step is to capture the stone correctly. I usually work by hand and push the punch straight down over the bezel or prongs. This causes the metal to start bending over the stone. The next step is to inspect the stone with a lens to be sure it is staying level. Repeat until the stone is seated on its bearing and can't move anymore.

Finally, force the metal down onto the stone uniformly all the way around. While this can be done by hand, I often gently tap the punch with a hammer. Finish by twisting the bezel back and forth to burnish the top of the bezel.

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

ALPINE CIVIC CENTER 801 W HOLLAND AVE, ALPINE, TX

35TH ALPINE GEM+ MINERAL SHOW

APRIL 17, 18, 19

FRIDAY ■ SATURDAY ■ SUNDAY

FREE ADMISSION

OVER 40 DEALERS

INDOOR + OUTDOOR

JASPERS, AGATES, GEODES, CRYSTALS, TURQUOISE, PRECIOUS GEMS, OPALS, CABOCHONS, FOSSILS, SPECIMENS, ROUGH MATERIAL, BEADS, NATIVE AMERICAN JEWELRY, WIRE WRAPPED PENDANTS, SPHERES, SILVER, GOLD, SPINNING WHEEL, TEXAN ART, & MORE

ALPINE TEXAS visitalpinetx.com

FOR MORE INFO

FRIDAY 9AM - 5PM
SATURDAY 9AM - 5PM
SUNDAY 10 AM - 4PM

2026

CHIHUAHUAN DESERT GEM & MINERAL CLUB

CONTACT LISA 303-818-5500 ROCKSOFALPINE@GMAIL.COM

THE EAST TEXAS GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY

PRESENTS

The 29th Annual GEM AND MINERAL SHOW

Gemstones • Jewelry • Minerals • Fossils

June 27 & 28, 2026

ADMISSION: Adults: $8.00 Children and Students: $4.00

EXHIBITORS & DEMOS
- Texas Thru Time Museum
- Stephen F. Austin University
- Discovery Science Place
- Tyler Junior College
- Lapidary Demo
- Wire Wrapping Demo
- Fluorescent Mineral Display

HOME OF THE WORLD RENOWNED ROCK FOOD TABLE

SALES & DISPLAYS
- Crystals
- Minerals
- Fossils
- Geodes
- Gemstones
- Jewelry
- Carvings
- Towers/Spheres
- Meteorites

PRIZES, AUCTIONS & GAMES
- Raffle Prizes
- Hourly Prizes
- Silent Auction Saturday & Sunday Only
- Adult Grand Prize
- Kids Grand Prize
- Kids Games

SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE

SHOW HOURS:
Saturday: 9 am - 6 pm • Sunday: 10 am - 4 pm

TYLER ROSE GARDEN CENTER
420 ROSE PARK DRIVE, TYLER, TEXAS

WWW.ETGMS.ORG

The Fort Worth Gem and Mineral Club is celebrating its 75th Diamond Jubilee

Gem, Mineral, Fossil, Bead, and Jewelry Show and Sale.

Saturday, May 23, 2026 ~ 9am – 5pm
Sunday, May 24, 2026 ~ 10am – 4pm
Will Rogers Memorial Center, Round Up Inn
3401 W. Lancaster, Fort Worth, TX

Join us to celebrate 75 years of fun for the whole family.
Door Prizes, Raffle, Silent Auction, Kids' Activities.
$7 Admission
$5 Military, Seniors, Students
Children 12 &under free

www.FortWorthGemandMineralClub.org

For current events, follow us:
https://Facebook/FWGMC

UPCOMING SHOWS 2026

March 14-15, Abilene, TX, Central Texas Gem & Mineral Society, Taylor County Expo Ctr.

April 11-12, 2026, Golden Spike Gem & Mineral Society,

April 11-12, 2026, San Antonio, TX, Fiesta of Gems, Southwest Gem & Mineral Society, Freeman Coliseum Exposition Halls, Morris Center

April 17-19, 2026, Alpine, TX, Chihuahuan Desert Gem & Mineral Club, Alpine Civic Ctr.

May 23-24, 2026, Fort Worth, TX, Fort Worth Gem & Mineral Society, Will Rogers Memorial Center

Information from Keith Harmon and various online platforms

To those who helped make this issue possible...

Sigrid Stewart
Rock & Gem Magazine
Ellery Borow
Garret Romaine
Brad Smith