

MAY-JUNE, 2026



**NEWSLETTER OF THE**  
**SOUTH CENTRAL FEDERATION**  
**Of Mineral Societies**



**Member of: The American Federation of Mineral Societies**

## ON THE COVER



On the cover and above, two display cases from the Midwest Federation of Mineral Societies' (MWFMS) annual show 2026, held in St. Charles, IL. May 23-24, 2026. In the middle: Ocean Jasper from Madagascar; at right, Malachite with calcite on goethite, specimens from The Treasure Shop of Geneva, IL



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## SOUTH CENTRAL FEDERATION OF MINERAL SOCIETIES, INC.

### 2026 SCFMS OFFICERS

**President: Sigrid Stewart**

**Executive V-P:**

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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 DEAD- LINE, 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**

**ANNUAL MEETING**

**TBD**

**SCFMS WEB-SITE:  
[WWW.SCFMS.NET](http://WWW.SCFMS.NET)**

The SCFMS is a member of the American Federation of Mineral Societies. [amfed.org](http://amfed.org)

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR/BEAC:**

**Susan Burch**  
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**ROCKHOUNDING WEST TEXAS**  
 Sigrid Stewert, SCFMS President

For some people on the East and West coasts, West Texas is the very definition of fly-over country – vast, serene, and foreboding – a place for arid deserts and mountains, relieved only by the Rio Grande and oil wells. Distances are intimidating – when traveling I-10, it is almost 400 miles from the Pecos River to El Paso. But to me, West Texas is a beautiful place with sweeping vistas, endless blue skies, mountains and canyons.



Rockhounds know this area as a premier destination for collecting agate, and there are many other interesting rocks and minerals, and even fossils to be found in the area. The cause is the vulcanism that occurred here 30 million years ago. Repeated rhyolitic and basaltic lava flows interspersed with ash falls provided the abundant silica to create the veins and nodules of agate and to petrify ancient forests.

Most land in West Texas is private, meaning that rockhounds generally hunt on ranches on a fee basis, and must abide by the rules set by the ranch owners. It started with the Woodward Ranch, which was open to collectors from the 1940's to 2014, when the ranch closed to collecting. Early on, the Woodward became famous for red and black plume agate. At least 60 other gemstones and minerals were found there, such as opal, carnelian and labradorite or sanidine crystals.



The South Larramore Ranch, downstream on Calamity Creek, features red, black and gold plume agate and petrified wood, as does the nearby Walker Ranch.



Green moss and pom-pom agate is found in the vicinity of Needle Peak south of these ranches. The East Needle Peak area is accessed by hunts with Teri Smith.

There are other famous names in agate hunting in the area, Marfa, the Singleton Ranch, the Stillwell Ranch. More recently the Kokernot o6, a successful cattle operation during years of adequate rain, permitted agate hunters, and many collectors had a wonderful time on that ranch, collecting at over 100 sites on the 500,000-acre ranch.

New ranches have opened to rockhounds, like the Boxcar Ranch and the Pigmon Ranch. I was able to hunt on both ranches recently, and when I was out on the Pigmon, an hour and a half drive north of the Alpine area, I got a text from my sister who had used an iPhone app to locate me, saying “It looks like you’re in the middle of nowhere!” I was, and I was loving it!

Many interesting videos by Scott Wilkins can be found on YouTube about West Texas rockhounding

Trips can be arranged with Teri Smith through <https://terismithrockhunts.com/>

Photos:  
 Upper left, Tube agate;  
 lower left, Vermiform agate;  
 upper right, Sagenite agate;  
 lower right, Plume agate.  
 All photos by Steve Blyskall



**CRACK THE NEWS**

Dear AFMS members,

The latest edition of Crack the News, the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies' newsletter for kids and teens, written by kids and teens will be posted soon at <https://www.juniors.amfed.org/juniors-newsletter>. I hope you enjoy reading about the rockhounding interests of kids and teens across the country, including sunstones, fossils, ammonites, fluorescent minerals, graptolites, gold, collecting in Central Oregon, the Art Gallery, and a geology radio star.

Please share this newsletter with the kids and teens in your club. And encourage them to contribute to the next edition of Crack the News. One topic we would like to see from juniors is an article about why he/she likes your juniors club. Details about submitting your article, poetry, artwork, or photos are at <https://www.juniors.amfed.org/juniors-newsletter>. Just scroll down the page for the instructions.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter.

Dennis Gertenbach  
Crack the News Editor





**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**

<p><b>EXHIBITORS &amp; DEMOS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texas Thru Time Museum</li> <li>• Stephen F. Austin University</li> <li>• Discovery Science Place</li> <li>• Tyler Junior College</li> <li>• Lapidary Demo</li> <li>• Wire Wrapping Demo</li> <li>• Fluorescent Mineral Display</li> </ul>	<p><b>SALES &amp; DISPLAYS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crystals</li> <li>• Minerals</li> <li>• Fossils</li> <li>• Geodes</li> <li>• Gemstones</li> <li>• Jewelry</li> <li>• Carvings</li> <li>• Towers/Spheres</li> <li>• Meteorites</li> </ul>	<p><b>PRIZES, AUCTIONS &amp; GAMES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raffle Prizes</li> <li>• Hourly Prizes</li> <li>• Silent Auction Saturday &amp; Sunday Only</li> <li>• Adult Grand Prize</li> <li>• Kids Grand Prize</li> <li>• Kids Games</li> </ul>
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HOME OF THE WORLD RENOWNED ROCK FOOD TABLE

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



**RECOGNIZING THE ROCKHOUNDS  
WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE**  
By Susan Burch,  
Rockhound of the Year Chairperson

I'm excited to share that I've been appointed the Regional Rockhound of the Year Chairperson for the South-Central Federation of Mineral Societies. So what is a Rockhound of the year? These are the members who quietly keep everything running. Every club has those individuals – the steady helpers, the behind-the-scenes doers, the ones who rarely seek recognition but always show up. This program gives us a simple, meaningful way to honor them.

With this role, I get to help clubs highlight the people who make a difference – the helpers, the encouragers, the steady hands who keep things moving.

Every club is invited to honor an individual, a couple, and a Junior member who stood out this year. Your club can choose them however you like: a committee vote, executive decision, member suggestions, or even letting last year's honoree select the next. There's no wrong way – the goal is simply to celebrate someone deserving.

Send me your honoree's name and a short write-up, and I'll prepare a certificate you can present at any gathering your club chooses. Email is easiest, but regular mail is always welcome.

Each region has its own chairperson who receives submissions and ensures honorees appear in their regional publication. If you don't hear back, please follow up – we're all volunteers, and sometimes messages get missed.

The certificate will include the SCFMS logo and my signature. I would love to see every club participate this year. It's quick, meaningful, and a wonderful way to lift up the people who make our Federation special.

Let's make sure our unsung heroes get the recognition they deserve.

#### Submission Check List

- ✦ Name of person or couple being honored.
- ✦ Submission year (important with end of year submissions)
- ✦ Name of club
- ✦ Submitted by

- ✦ Email address for electronic version or USPS Mailing Address for receipt of SCFMS certificate
- ✦ Approximately 75 to 100 words of why the club would like to honor the person or couple.
- Picture for publishing (if desired and highly encouraged)

My email is scfmseditor at yahoo.com and if you'd like to mail me a copy instead, please email for my address. I look forward to your submissions so, I can also forward them to the AFMS!



#### ROCKHOUND OF THE YEAR CHAIRPERSONS BY REGION From AFMS

The American Federation of Mineral Societies (AFMS) has a Rockhound of the Year (ACROY) program that honors an individual or couple and a junior member in each club for special contributions during the year. Each region has its own regional chairperson who receives submissions and ensures the honoree's name and article appear in the regional paper [www.amfed.org](http://www.amfed.org).

Here are the current regional chairpersons and their contact details:

- **California:** Chris Ward – chris\_ward678 at yahoo.com
- **Eastern:** Ellery Borow – rocknellery at fairpoint.com
- **Midwest:** Jeanine N. Mielecki – jaynine9 at aol.com
- **Northwest:** Laurie Ellis – nfmsroy at gmail.com
- **Rocky Mountain:** Chris Whitney-Smith – ask.chrisws at yahoo.com

**South Central:** Susan Burch- scfmseditor at yahoo.com

**Southeast:** Marty Hart – ACROY at gemizo.com [www.amfed.org](http://www.amfed.org)

#### How to submit:

Clubs can email or mail their honoree's name, year, club name, submission year, and a 75–100 word description of why they are being honored, along with a photo if desired. **The submission should be sent to the regional chairperson to ensure inclusion in the regional newsletter.** Certificates are then mailed to the club for presentation [www.amfed.org](http://www.amfed.org).

# ROCK SEEKER WORD SEARCH



## Theme: Rockhounding Tools

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Assist ▾
Print
Settings

C A R E M M A H P K  
 G O G C O L O I K K  
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 E L O P O K R G O A  
 S T A G A V I R B P  
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 H O E B O T S S T C  
 C W S H F R H E O A  
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 G L S S E L G G O G

- backpack
- chisel
- compass
- gloves
- goggles
- hammer
- notebook
- pickaxe
- sifter
- trowel

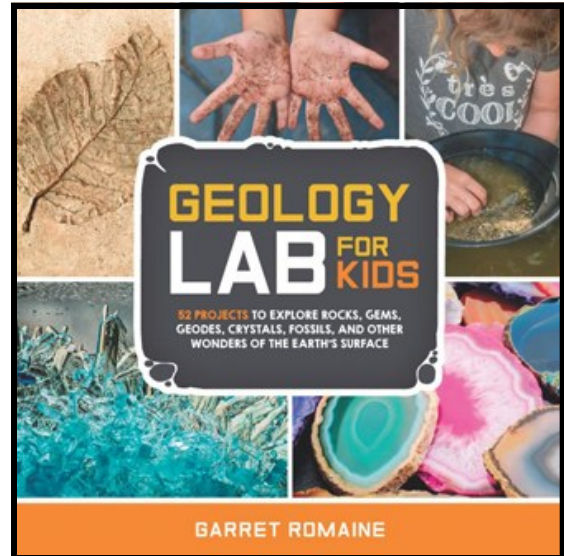
Rock Seeker Word Search - Agates  
 Powered by [PuzzleMe™](#)

Find the puzzle online to discover the solution, and check how long it takes you to solve!

[https://rockseeker.com/puzzles/word-search-rockhounding-tools/?utm\\_source=convertkit&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=%E2%9B%8F%EF%B8%8FRed-and-black+volcanic+glass+and+a+bit+of+wulfenite+-+20876110&sh\\_kit=48e500ff1ddff36b90e6ef9e704131ba2e89f68cc5222639453d32b31d29ce08](https://rockseeker.com/puzzles/word-search-rockhounding-tools/?utm_source=convertkit&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=%E2%9B%8F%EF%B8%8FRed-and-black+volcanic+glass+and+a+bit+of+wulfenite+-+20876110&sh_kit=48e500ff1ddff36b90e6ef9e704131ba2e89f68cc5222639453d32b31d29ce08)

UNIT  
**9**
**SIGNS OF LIFE**

When we built a time scale of the Earth's age, we saw that our current geologic age is very young. But there has been life on Earth since tiny algae first started, almost 4 billion years ago—before there was oxygen in the atmosphere. Since we have limited rocks from those days, we don't have a lot of information about them in the fossil record. Still, we have enough to frame up solid ideas about what was going on. In this series of labs, you'll look at all the different ways the Earth leaves us clues that we are not the only ones living here. You'll learn some of the different ways that the Earth creates fossils for us to enjoy, and you'll get to practice as a real paleontologist, gently digging away to get to something interesting. Long ago, geologists had some very unlikely theories about how fossils could end up on a mountaintop. Answering that question today seems easy



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

 LAB  
**35**
**PRESS A LEAF**

Make an impression of a leaf—  
just like Mother Nature does

**MATERIALS**

- 1/4 cup (32 g) of cornstarch
- 1/2 cup (110 g) of baking soda
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) of water
- Plate
- Wax paper
- Scissors
- 2–3 leaves or small branches; ginkgo and sequoia are excellent choices
- Diluted black watercolor paint



**Safety Tips-** Keep all materials out of your eyes

Continued on Page 11



Continued from Page 9



### PROTOCOL

**STEP 1:** First, create your “fossil dough.” Stir the cornstarch, baking soda, and water in a small saucepan and cook at medium heat until it forms a paste.

**STEP 2:** Remove from the stove and scrape it out onto a plate. After it cools, knead the dough as you would if you were baking bread.

**STEP 3:** Shape into six balls and put them in the

refrigerator.

**STEP 4:** Cut six squares of wax paper, about 6" x 6" (15 x 15 cm).

**STEP 5:** Place a ball of dough on a wax paper square and smash it out so it is flat and round.

**STEP 6:** Press your plant material into the dough and remove it, leaving a fossil imprint

**STEP 7:** When the dough dries, you can lightly paint your impression with diluted black water color—just enough to highlight it—or you can use more paint as you wish. If you find your dough cracks too much, you can simply use modeling clay.



### Creative Enrichment

1. Look up the scientific name of the plant and label it in the dough by pressing with a toothpick tip.
2. What colors make the most realistic fossil?

## THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE FUN

Most of the time when you collect plant fossils, you won't recover plant material. Unlike petrified wood, where the original chemicals have been replaced by quartz, a typical plant fossil is usually just an impression of the original. The black coloring that is common to plant fossils is usually some carbon that remained behind as the rest of the plant dissolved. Ginkgoes and sequoias are both a kind of “living fossil”—they are still around us after millions of years. The metasequoia is the state fossil of Oregon, but it's not very different from the sequoia trees that are common in California. If Oregon is cooler than California today but there are sequoia fossils in Oregon, what does that tell you about the climate when those sequoia fossils were laid down? It must have been a little warmer back then. By studying leaves, seeds, wood, and other fossils, we can learn a lot about the climate when the fossils formed. Geologists who study fossils are called paleontologists, scientists who study ancient life. As you can probably guess, studying ancient life means you must know a lot about present-day life, too, so you can make comparisons. Paleontologists are very interested in evolution—how plants and animals have changed over time to adapt to the changing world around them. Ever since the Earth could sustain life, about 3.8 billion years ago, the fossil record has left us clues about the world back then. Sorting it all out is like solving a puzzle, but it's a lot of fun.

### PUZZLE POINTS

By Jason Sumpter of Atchison, Kansas

I've always been fascinated with arrowheads since I was little, which led me into hunting for artifacts. Then I wanted to learn to make them. I've now been at it for about 15 years. I do still break a few on occasion or there are flaws in some that are not worthy of selling as a finished piece. Making puzzle points is a way to remove those flaws and using broken points to still create something pleasing to look at and display.



### 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](mailto: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  
JULY-AUGUST, 2026  
NEWSLETTER IS  
JUNE 25, 2026**

*Photos: Upper left, a 'puzzle point' set by Jason Sumpter; At left, more knapped points by Jason Sumpter.*

## BENCH TIPS BY BRAD SMITH

**DRILL PRESS VISES**

A drill press vise is a versatile tool to hold a workpiece securely and in precise alignment. It reduces the risks of working with high power motors, using larger drill bits, and dealing with heat generated in the operation. The vise can be clamped to the drill press table if needed and is quite handy for use at the bench to hold things for sawing or riveting.

You can find them at stores that carry machine tool supplies. My feeling is that the best ones are made from steel. In particular, I like the ones with V grooves cut into the jaw plates. That lets me hold a punch straight upright or hold a rod horizontal. To find a supplier, search on "drill press vise" at sites like [micromark.com](http://micromark.com) [mscdirect.com/enco](http://mscdirect.com/enco) [smallparts.com](http://smallparts.com) [grizzly.com](http://grizzly.com)

**DENTAL GOLD**

You might think that a couple pieces of dental gold would be valuable, but if you only have a small amount, it can be a problem. Sending it to a refiner is expensive for small amounts of metal.

I made the mistake of thinking I could melt it and roll it out as sheet. It turns out the trace metals in dental gold make it a good material in your mouth but cause it to crack if you try to forge it or roll it out as a sheet.

So what to do with a couple gold crowns? A reasonable alternative is to try incorporating the metal into your jewelry. If you have enough material to do a casting, that's probably the best use for dental gold.

If you're not into casting, try melting it on a solder pad and while molten, divide it into small pieces with your solder pick. Then re-flow each piece to make little gold balls for use as accents on your designs. The balls can also be planished a bit to make

small discs or struck with a design stamp to add texture on the top.



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

[BradSmithJewelry@gmail.com](mailto:BradSmithJewelry@gmail.com)

Please, check out more Smart Solutions for Your Jewelry Making Problems  
[Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith](https://www.amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith)



ROCKS THAT HOST GOLD, SILVER AND OTHER HEAVY MINERALS

By Hassan Hamdati, FWGMC

1) Quartz (Quartz veins)

- The most important rock associated with gold worldwide

- Gold is often found free inside quartz veins

- Strong signs: fractures, iron staining, red/yellow oxides

2) Volcanic and metamorphic rocks

- Such as: Schist, Greenstone, Slate

- Excellent environments for gold deposition

3) Sulfide rocks

- Contain: pyrite, arsenopyrite, chalcopyrite

- Gold is often microscopic inside these minerals

- Very important in modern mining

4) Placer deposits (river sediments)

- Black sands, river gravels

- Can contain free gold, platinum, magnetite, ilmenite

Second: Rocks that host Platinum Group Metals (PGMs)

5) Ultramafic rocks

- Such as: peridotite, dunite, gabbro

- Best environment for: platinum, palladium, rhodium

Important note for prospectors:

The best rocks are not the “prettiest,” but those that indicate:

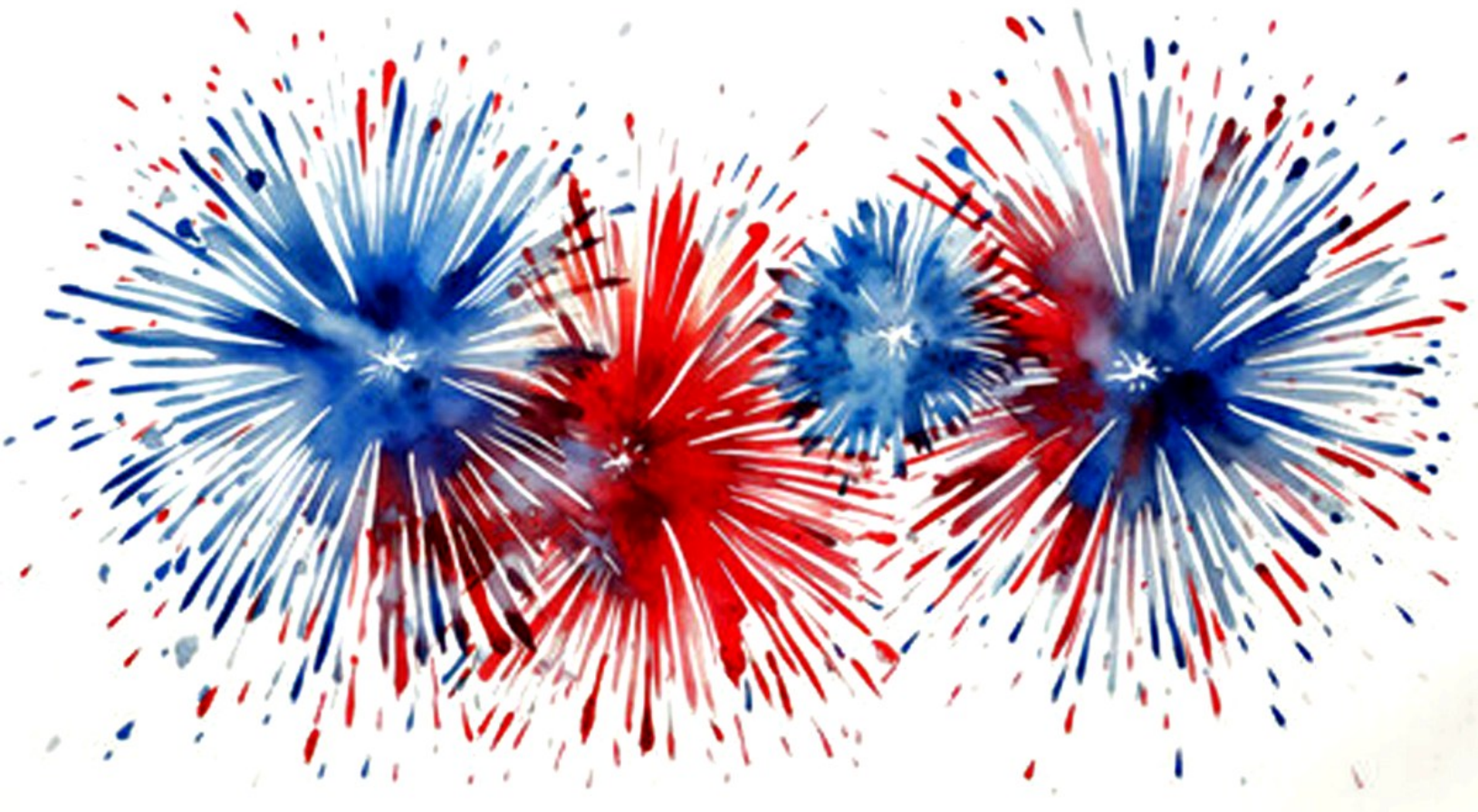
- Movement of mineral-rich fluids
- Presence of fractures and veins
- Heavy minerals + iron oxides + quartz.



## UPCOMING SHOWS 2026

**June 13-14—GRAPEVINE, TEXAS:** Annual show; Arlington Gem & Mineral Club; Grapevine Convention Center, 1209 South Main St; Sat. 9-6, Sun. 10-4; Website: <https://www.agmc57.org/>

**June 27-28—TYLER, TEXAS:** Annual show; East Texas Gem & Mineral Society; Tyler Rose Garden Center, 420 Rose Park Drive; Sat. 9-6, Sun. 10-4; Website: <https://www.etgms.org/>



**THANK  
YOU**

To those who helped make this issue possible...

Sigrid Stewart  
Steve Blyskall  
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Rock Seeker  
Garret Romaine  
Jason Sumpter  
Brad Smith