



Rockonteur

The Monthly Newsletter of the Santa Lucia Rockhounds

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President's Message

Greetings Fellow Rockhounds,

Summer is upon us! Time to get out and find some rocks, minerals, and fossils! Get your summer going in grand fashion on June 13th as the club is sponsoring a return trip to the Pedotti Ranch in San Simeon. Join your fellow club members in the creek bed full of jaspers, agates, and other local minerals.

I hope everyone enjoyed the "Silicate Minerals" presentation by our own Rock Doc, Wayne Mills and his cohort, Kim Noyes. I, for one, learned a lot, including how to pronounce "CHALCEDONY" without sounding like a newbie. Our club librarian, past president, and founder, Barbara Bilyeu, complemented the presentation by bringing a number of publications and books on silicate minerals, jaspers, and quartz. Thanks to all three of them for a worthy presentation.

During the May meeting, we awarded two scholarships to deserving North County high school graduates. We wish them both a successful college experience! See the details elsewhere in this newsletter.

Also, during the meeting, our super treasurer, Jannine Kennedy, provided us with the financial details for our annual "Treasures of the Earth" rock show. The show was an unqualified success and will provide adequate funding for all the club's activities into the next year. On the rock show front, our show committee co-chair, Heidi

Adams, is bowing out after several years of contributing loads of time to ensure the show's success. Our thanks to Heidi for a job well done.

Looking to the future, the club's annual Lapidary Day has been set for October 17, 2026 at Galen Moyer's property in Templeton. This is a multifaceted event: part club picnic, part club flea market, and part educational. Put this date in your phone as it's always a good time. More details will be forthcoming as the date approaches.

For much of June, I will be away back east for some business and two fossil hunting adventures. I will miss the June General Meeting on June 15th, but have no fear, you will be led by our esteemed Senior Director, Ken Gagner. I am sure Ken will have a good show lined up for you in my absence, and I'll see you in July!

Rock on!

Ted Gray

El Presidente, Santa Lucia Rockhounds



Above: Ted perusing a club library book to research an item in the month's drawing.

Photo by Beth Walls



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Upcoming Events

June Board Meeting

Monday, June 1st, Templeton Community Center, 7 p.m.

June Junior Rockhound Meeting

The June Junior Rockhounds Meeting will be held Monday, June 15th at 6 p.m. at the Templeton Community Center.

June General Meeting

The June General Meeting will be held Monday, June 15th at the Templeton Community Center at 7 p.m.



Above: Don Huntington was presented with a special birthday surprise by Bruce Mundt of 11 nested abalone shells. Don once had a very special collection of nested shells, which unexpectedly walked away many years ago. Bruce remembered this story, and thoughtfully gifted Don with this treasure.

Silicates Rock! May Presentation

Wayne Mills, SLR

Beneath your boots, Earth is quietly telling a very long story written in minerals.

It begins with a surprisingly small cast of characters: about 103 elements from the Periodic Table. These elements can exist as solids, liquids, or gases, but when they mingle and bond, they become something far more structured. Out of their combinations come over 3,000 minerals, sorted into seven major families: native elements like gold and copper, sulfides, oxides, carbonates, halides, phosphates, and the largest and most influential group of all—the silicates.

Silicates are built mainly from silicon and oxygen, sometimes with other elements. Together, they make up about 90% of Earth's crust, and just those two elements alone account for roughly 74% of it. That means most of the ground beneath us is essentially a vast framework of silicon and oxygen, arranged in endless variations.

To understand how dominant they are, imagine walking from one end of the mineral world to the other. You'd start with agate and end with zircon, and everything in between would still mostly be silicates.

One of the most familiar members of this family is

feldspar, the quiet workhorse of Earth's surface. Feldspar comes in two main forms. Orthoclase feldspar can hide a bit of magic inside it, including moonstone, which flashes with a soft blue glow when the light hits just right. Then there's plagioclase feldspar, a whole series of minerals that includes albite and anorthite, as well as labradorite—the gemstone that seems to trap flashes of rainbow fire inside its layers.

Quartz is silicon dioxide, and it appears in more forms than almost any other mineral. Sometimes it grows into clear, smoky, or purple crystals like amethyst. Other times it becomes rose quartz, glowing softly like frozen dawn light, or citrine with a warm golden tone. It can also form as agate, with bands of color folded like time itself, or jasper, dense and earthy with deep, opaque patterns. In its cryptocrystalline forms, quartz can become chalcedony or even opal, the latter containing flashes of internal fire found in places like Australia, Nevada, and Ethiopia.

Quartz doesn't just exist on its own—it builds the world around it. Together with feldspar, it forms granite, the rock that makes up much of the continents. On the ocean floor, basalt takes over, darker and denser because of its higher iron content.

Deep underground, where magma cools slowly, something special happens. Crystals have time to grow large and intricate, forming pegmatites. These rare zones can produce oversized minerals like tourmaline, mica, and gemstones that seem



Top: Wayne Mills, **Middle and Bottom:** Samples from his display
Photos by Beth Walls

Silicates Rock! (continued)

almost too perfect to be natural. In places like the Pala mines, pegmatites have gifted the world shimmering tourmalines and purple lepidolite mica that looks almost otherworldly in its softness and color.

And then there are the gemstones,

Garnets come in a whole family of colors: deep reds, earthy browns, vibrant greens, and even rare emerald tones. Even more surprising is that one of the most prized gemstones, emerald, is itself a silicate. So is benitoite, a rare mineral so unusual it became California's state gemstone.

Even Earth's most famous "hardness contest" has a twist. Diamonds, the hardest natural substance, are pure carbon. Graphite, also carbon, is one of the softest minerals. The same element, two completely different identities.

But not all silicates are born from fire and magma. Some come from life itself.

In the deep ocean, microscopic organisms like diatoms and foraminifera build tiny silica shells. When they die, those shells can compress into rocks like diatomite and chert, preserving ancient biological material in stone. In this way, even living things quietly join the silicate story.

Sometimes Earth's creativity goes further still. Gas bubbles trapped in volcanic rock become geodes, hollow spheres that later fill with quartz crystals and agates.

Trees buried in ash or sediment can slowly be replaced by silica, turning into petrified wood that still holds ghostly traces of bark and grain. In places like Montana, agates sometimes preserve hints of ancient wood structure, like a memory frozen in stone.

Even California's identity is written in silicates. Serpentine, the state rock, is a magnesium silicate. And benitoite, the state gemstone, is a rare barium titanium silicate found in only a few places on Earth.

So when you step outside and pick up a rock, you're not just holding a mineral. You're holding a page from a long, layered story—one written by heat, pressure, water, time, and the quiet persistence of silicon and oxygen shaping almost everything around us.



B-2. TOPAZ (Var. IMPERIAL)
on QUARTZ
Aluminum fluorosilicate
Capão Mine, Ouro Preto,
Minas Gerais, Brazil (SC)

B-16. QUARTZ (Rutilated)
Silicon dioxide
Novo Horizonte, Bahia, Brazil

STAUROLITE ("Fairy Crosses")
Iron aluminum silicate hydroxide
Near Penasco, Taos Co., N.M.
(SC~1974)



TOURMALINATED QUARTZ
SCHORL TOURMALINE
Sodium (magnesium, iron)
aluminum borosilicate
Uruba Mine, Itinga,
Minas Gerais, Brazil

B-12. CACOXENITE
Iron aluminum phosphate hydroxide
Minas Gerais, Brazil

Photos on this page:
Samples from Wayne Mills's display

Photos by Beth Walls

May General Meeting Highlights

Kim Noyes, SLR

Silicate minerals (silicon + oxygen atoms) comprise nearly 90% of the Earth's crust making them a material we encounter anytime we are out rockhounding for whatever collectible material is in that area.

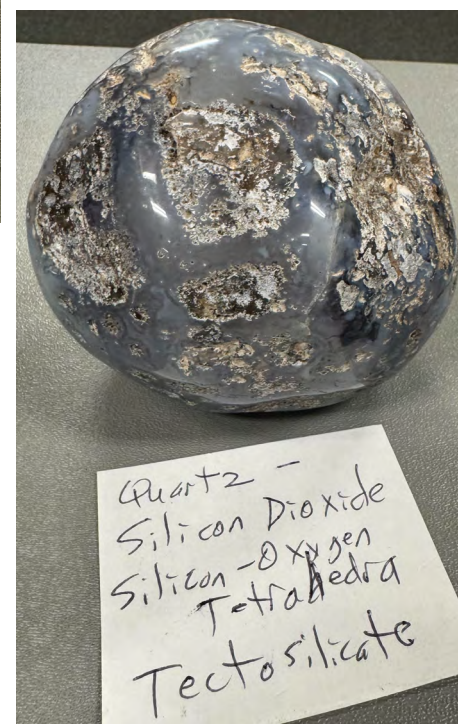
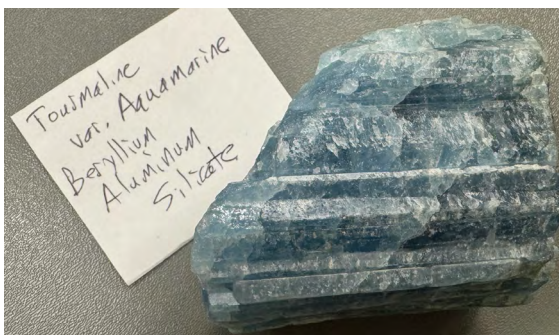
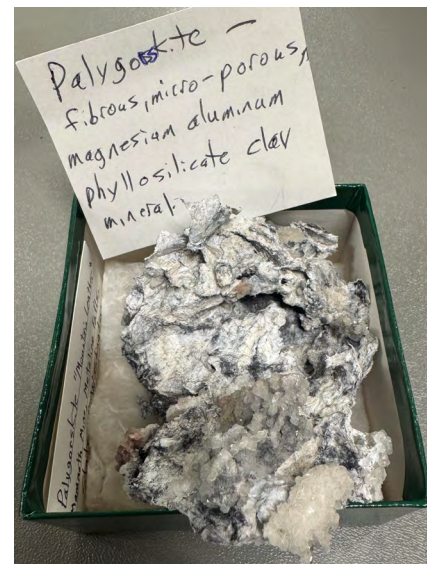
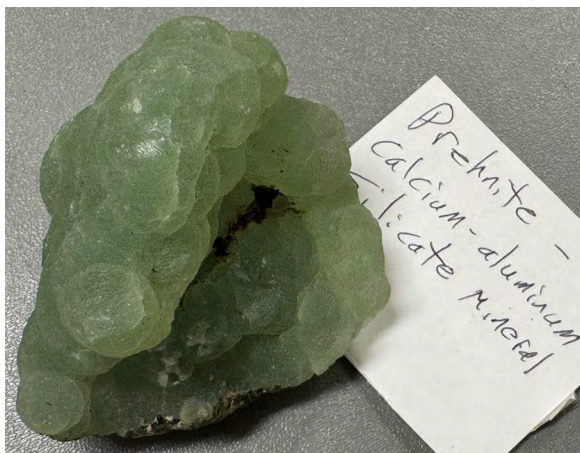
Not surprisingly, the two most common mineral families found in the Earth's crust are silicate minerals, to wit, quartz and feldspar.

Quartz family variants include sandstone, quartzite, chalcedony, jasper, chert, agate, amethyst, ametrine, citrine, rose & smoky quartz, opal, chrysoprase, tiger eye, carnelian, bloodstone, sardonyx & onyx (not to be confused with onyx marble, a banded marble stone commonly misidentified as onyx), and many petrified woods are comprised of quartz minerals.

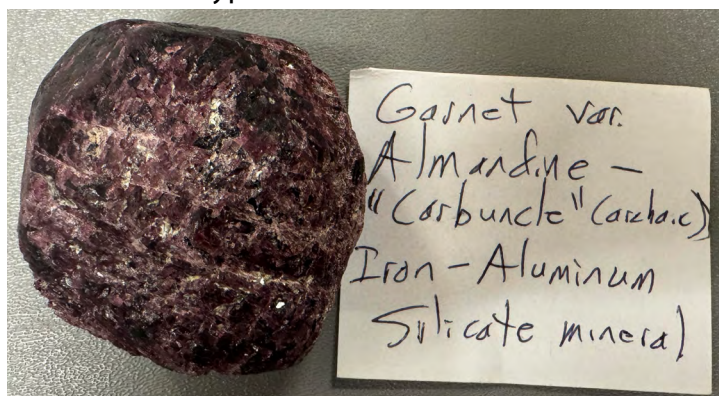
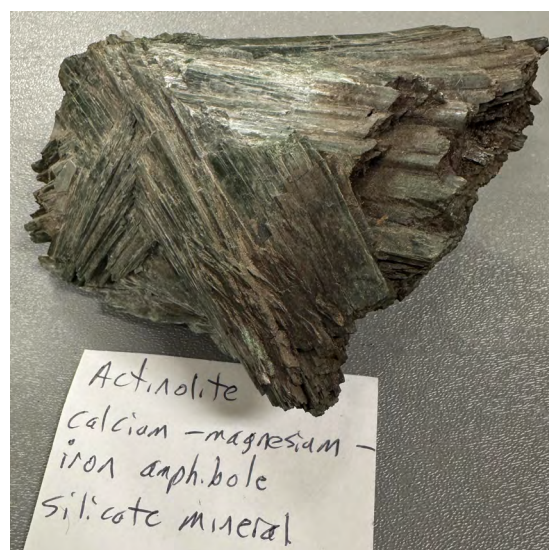
Feldspar family minerals (silicon + oxygen + aluminum + sodium + calcium or potassium or barium or lithium) include microcline, orthoclase, oligoclase, andesine, albite, bytownite, amazonite, labradorite, moonstone & sunstone.

Granites contain both quartz and feldspar minerals.

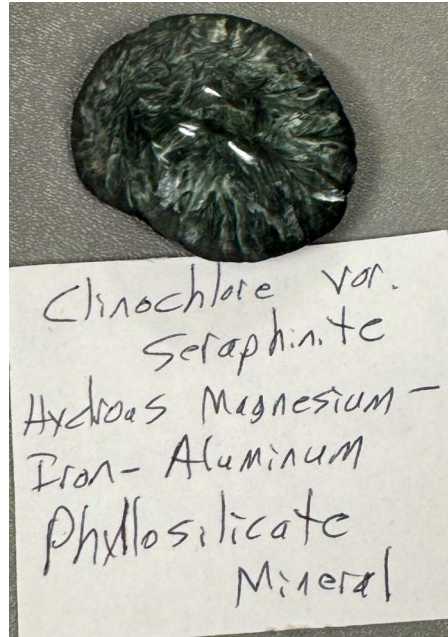
I selected these particular mineral specimens to share during the May meeting as they are my favorite varieties of silicate minerals or my best/only specimens of those particular silicate mineral types.



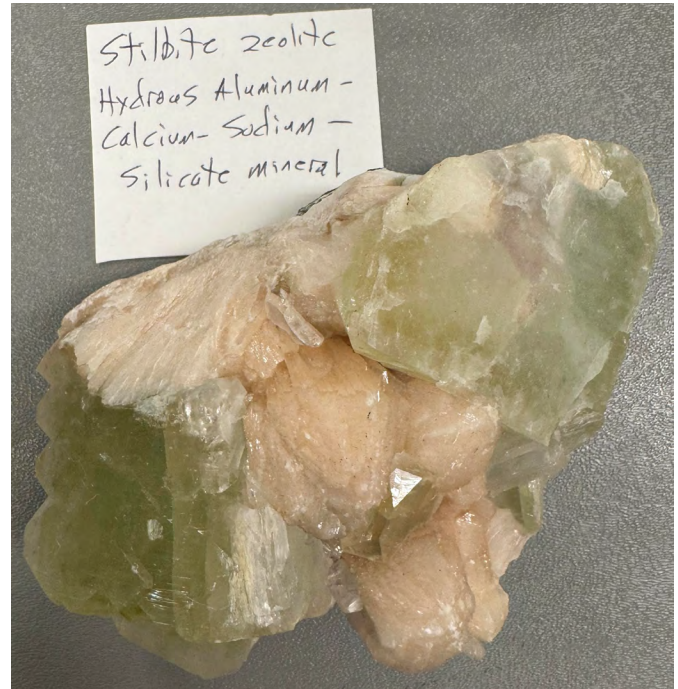
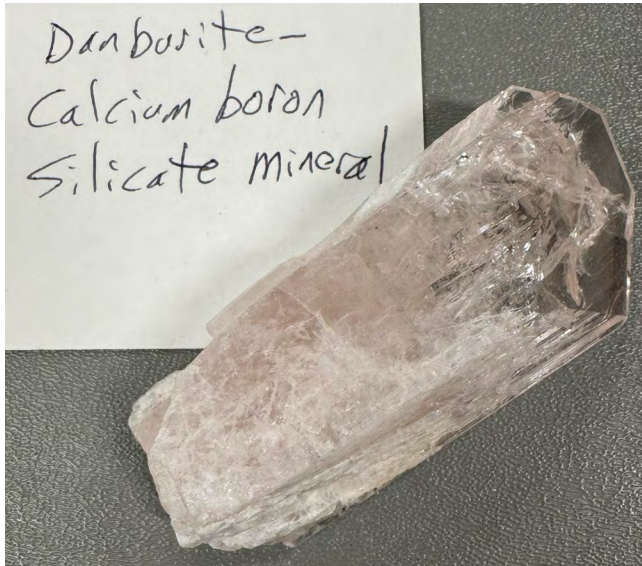
Photos on this page: Kim Noyes shared silicate samples from his collection to support Wayne Mills' presentation. Specimen information is included in each photo.



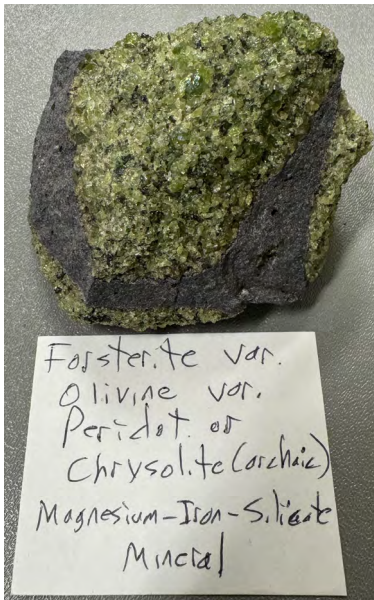
May General Meeting Highlights (continued)



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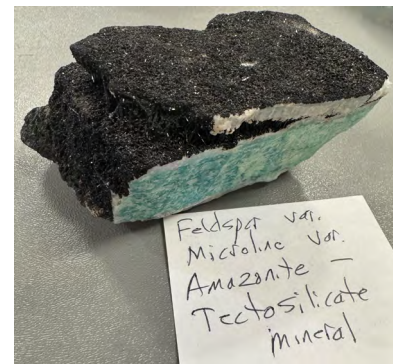


May General Meeting Highlights (continued)



Photos on this page:

Kim Noyes shared silicate samples from his collection to support Wayne Mills' presentation. Specimen information is included in each photo.



May General Meeting Highlights (continued)



Above left: Wayne Mills checks out the items on the drawing table, overseen by Ken and Michelle Gagner.

Above right: Barbara Bilyeu always brings informative books from the club library to support the monthly presentation.

Below: Caleb Willis and Karin Gray working the club's silent auction table.



May Junior Rockhound Awards

Beth Walls, SLR

Henry was awarded his "Rock Star" award with a plaque and a pin. He has completed all 20 badges in the American Federation of Mineralogical Society (AFMS) Future Rockhounds of America (FRA) program. In addition to those badges, he also earned his AFMS FRA Rockhound badge after earning his first six badges. (Photos of Henry are to the right and below.)

Since joining the Santa Lucia Rockhounds, he's been an active member of the club, and has volunteered at the club's annual rock and gem show.

Several other Junior Rockhounds were awarded their Special Effects badges during the May meeting. (shown in the bottom and center right photos)



Santa Lucia Rockhounds Scholarship Recipients

Beth Walls, SLR

For many young rockhounds, a fascination with stones begins with a pocket full of agates, a sparkling quartz crystal, or the excitement of finding something unexpected on the ground. Our club is proud to help turn that curiosity into opportunity through our annual scholarship program for high school students.

Each year, The Santa Lucia Rockhounds awards scholarships to graduating seniors who demonstrate a passion for geology, earth science, environmental studies, or related fields. The scholarship recognizes students who are not only academically dedicated, but who also show curiosity about the natural world and a desire to keep learning.

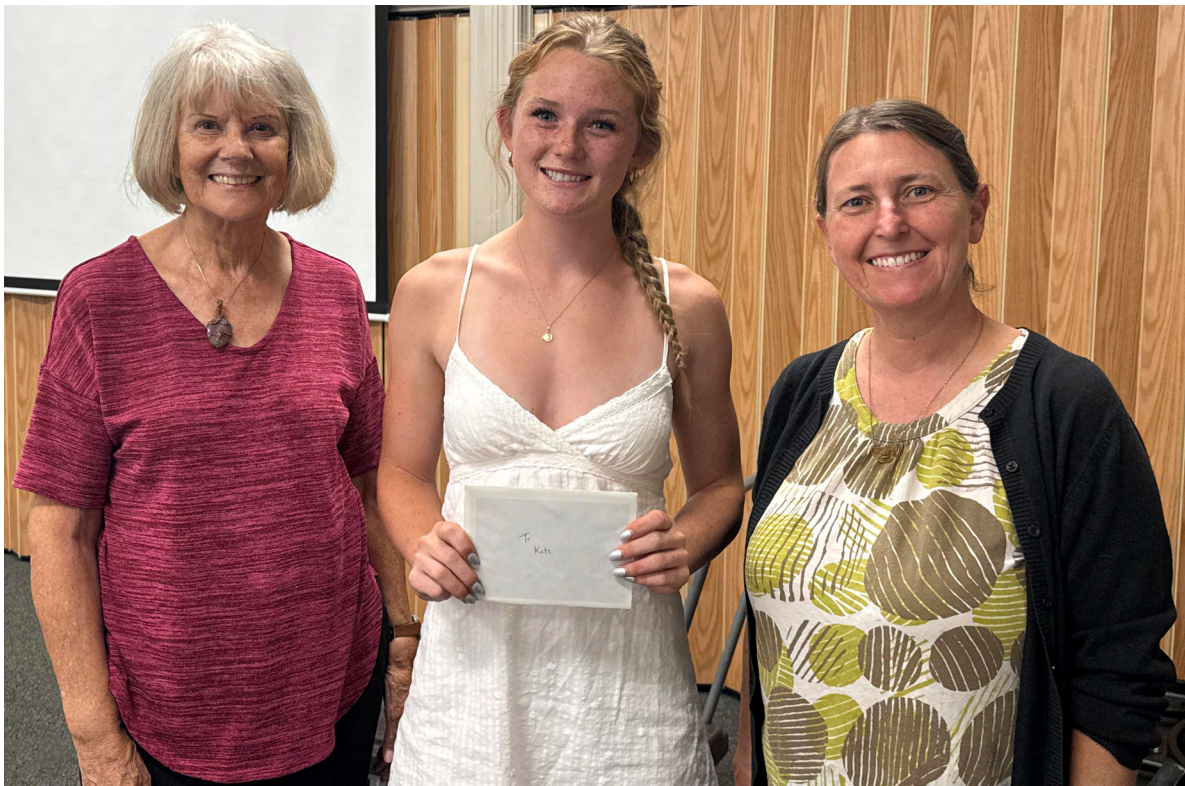
Connor Bender from Paso Robles High School is the Founder of a Paleontology Club at Paso Robles High School.

Katherine Jane Nicholson from Templeton High School is a four-year member of the THS. Environmental Club. She served as President for her junior and senior years. They hold bi-weekly meetings, create a safe space to discuss environmental issues, organize beach, community, and school cleanups, and the club helps add to San Luis Obispo County's oak tree database.



Above (left to right): Mary Beatty, Connor Bender, and Megan Cannon
Connor will be going to Fresno State for a Bachelor's Degree in Geology and then complete a Master's Degree in Paleontology.

Below (left to right): Mary Beatty, Katherine Jane Nicholson, and Megan Cannon
Katherine will be headed to the University of California, Santa Barbara to study Biology with a focus on Environmental Science.



Junior Rockhounds: Building Collections

Beth Walls, SLR

During their May meeting, the Junior Rockhounds explored how Junior Rockhounds can start and manage a rock collection.

Building a rock and mineral collection is a fun way to learn about geology while creating something personal you can keep for years.

1. Start by Looking Close to Home

You do not need to travel to a desert canyon or mountain mine to begin. Great specimens can be found:

- in your backyard
- along hiking trails
- near rivers or streams
- at beaches
- in gravel driveways or landscaping rocks

Look for rocks with unusual colors, sparkles, stripes, crystals, or smooth shapes.



Photos by Beth Walls

2. Bring Simple Collecting Tools

- A beginner kit can be very simple:
- small backpack or bucket
- zip-top bags or paper bags
- notebook
- pencil
- hand lens or magnifying glass
- small brush for cleaning dirt off specimens

Some rockhounds also bring gloves and safety glasses if collecting in rough areas.

3. Label Every Specimen

This is one of the most important parts of collecting. A rock with no label becomes a mystery later.

- Write down:
- where you found it
- the date
- color
- texture
- anything unusual about it

You can number each rock and match it to a notebook entry.

Example:
Specimen #12
Found: creek bed near park
Date: May 24
Notes: smooth gray rock with white crystal streak

4. Clean and Store Your Finds

- Once home:
- rinse with water
- use a soft toothbrush to remove dirt
- let dry fully

- Store rocks in:
- egg cartons
- tackle boxes
- small display trays
- labeled shelves or jars

Many collectors like to arrange specimens by color, location, or rock type.



Juniors Building Collections (continued)

5. Learn to Identify Them

Try sorting your collection into groups:

Igneous rocks– formed from cooled lava or magma

Sedimentary rocks– made from layers of sand, mud, or shells

Metamorphic rocks– changed by heat and pressure

Minerals– crystal forms like quartz or calcite

A field guide or rock identification app can help match your specimens.

6. Trade and Share

Rockhounding is even more fun with others. Junior collectors can:
trade duplicate specimens with friends
visit local gem and mineral shows
join a rock club
display favorite finds at school or science fairs



Why Collect Rocks?

A specimen collection is more than a box of stones. It becomes a record of places you have explored and things you have discovered. Every rock tells a story about volcanoes, oceans, rivers, pressure, heat, and time.

For a junior rockhound, one small rock can become the beginning of a lifelong adventure.



2026 Rock and Gem Shows

Mark your calendars!

June 27-28, 2026

Culver City, CA

Culver City Rock & Mineral Club

Veterans Memorial Auditorium, 4117

Overland Ave., Culver City, CA 90230

Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 6 PM, Sunday

10 AM – 5 PM

This year's featured gemstone is

Malachite, which is celebrated for its

rich green colors and natural beauty.

Admission and parking are free,

making it a perfect outing for families,

hobbyists, and gem enthusiasts.

Contact: culvercityrocks35@gmail.com

Website: <https://culvercityrocks.org/fiesta/>

July 31, August 1-2, 2026

Nipomo, CA

Orcutt Mineral Society

Nipomo High School, 525 North

Thompson Avenue, Nipomo, California

93444

Hours: Friday & Saturday, 10 am to 5

pm; Sunday, 10 am to 4 pm

Orcutt Mineral Society's 58th Rock &

Gem Show

60 outside and 12 inside dealers; kids

booth and food trucks.

Contact: nipomocowgirl55@yahoo.com

/ 805-929-2783

August 1-2, 2026

Roseville, CA

Roseville Rock Rollers Gem &

Mineral Society

Roebbelen Event Center within @

the Grounds, 700 Event Center Drive,

Roseville, CA 95678

Hours: Saturday 10am-5pm

Sunday 10am-4pm

Annual show; Roseville Rock Rollers

Gem and Mineral Society. \$10, Kids - 12

and under Free - Venue Parking fee;

It's the Rock Rollers 63rd annual big

show. Over 80 vendors, inside/out,

featuring: Crystals, Fossils, Minerals

from around the world, Jewelry,

Amethyst, Gemstones, Opal, Beads,
Meteorites, Demo's, Mineral ID,
Rock Auctions, Special area for Kids.

NorCal's largest show, ccontact

Gloria P Marie, (916) 216-1114;

Email: [gloriarosevillerockrollers@](mailto:gloriarosevillerockrollers@gmail.com)

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

Website: rockrollers.com

August 15-16, 2026

Tehachapi, CA

Tehachapi Valley Gem & Mineral

Society

Tehachapi Senior Center, 500 East F

Street, Tehachapi, CA

Hours: Saturday 9 AM – 5 PM,

Sunday 9 AM – 4 PM

Free; Gem, mineral, and jewelry

show with amazing vendors, family

activities, opals and fine stones.

Handmade jewelry. Raffles, geodes

and so much more; contact Ronald

Myrick, (661) 972-1117; Email:

travis462@outlook.com

Website: tvgems.net

August 22-23, 2026

Escondido, CA

Palomar Gem & Mineral Club

California Center for the Arts, The

Museum, 340 N. Escondido Blvd.,

Escondido, CA

Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM,

Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM

9,000 square feet of faceted stones,

handmade jewelry, cabs, lapidary

rough, minerals, slabs and more.

Admission \$5.0, under 12 Free. Free

parking;.

Contact: PGMCshow@gmail.com,

Vendors Contact: [tonifloyd41615@](mailto:tonifloyd41615@gmail.com)

[gmail.com](mailto:tonifloyd41615@gmail.com)

Website: palomargem.org

September 18-20, 2026

CFMS Show

Reno, NV

Reno Gem and Mineral Society

Grand Sierra Resort, Silver State

Pavilion, 2500 East 2nd Street, Reno,

Nevada 89595

Hours: Friday and Saturday 9 AM – 5

PM, Sunday 9 AM – 4 PM

The Jackpot of Gems is one of

the premier gem and mineral

shows in the western United

States, attracting collectors,

families, educators, students, and

enthusiasts from across the region.

The Show features dealers from

around the country, competitive

exhibits judged under AFMS rules,

demonstrations, educational

programming, and hands-on

activities for children.

The 2026 Show is especially

significant as it is being held

in conjunction with the CFMS,

expanding both our reach and our

impact.

Contact: [showdirector@](mailto:showdirector@renogemandmineralsociety.org)

renogemandmineralsociety.org

Website: renogms.org

September 19-20, 2026

Chico, CA

Feather River Lapidary &

Mineral Society

Silver Dollar Fairground, 2357 Fair

St., Chico CA 95928

Hours: Saturday 9 AM – 5 PM,

Sunday 9 AM – 4 PM

Feather River Rock, Gem & Jewelry

Show. Admission is \$6 for adults,

free for 16 and under. Free Parking

courtesy of the Feather Lapidary &

Mineral Society

Contact: [shows@featherriverrocks.](mailto:shows@featherriverrocks.org)

[org](mailto:shows@featherriverrocks.org)

Website: [https://www.](https://www.featherriverrocks.org/show-2/)

[featherriverrocks.org/show-2/](https://www.featherriverrocks.org/show-2/)

September 19-20, 2026

Monterey, CA

Carmel Valley Gem & Mineral

Society

Monterey Fairgrounds, 2004

Fairgrounds Road, Monterey, CA

93940

Hours: Saturday and Sunday 10

AM – 5 PM

Website: <http://cvgems.rocks>

September 26-27, 2026

San Luis Obispo, CA

San Luis Obispo Gem and

Mineral Club

Alex Madonna Expo Center, 120

Madonna Rd, San Luis Obispo, CA

93405

Hours: 10AM - 5PM

Gems By The Sea will feature

dealers selling a fantastic array

of gems, minerals, fossils,

carvings, jewelry, beads, jade,

crystals, meteorites, lapidary and

metaphysical items. Also unique

handcrafted items by local artisans. There will kids' activities and demonstrations of jewelry-making and lapidary crafts. \$5 Admission (Children, 12 and under free). Free parking
 Contact: 2026show@slogem.org
 Website: slogem.org/gems-by-the-sea/

**October 10-11, 2026
 Redwood City, CA**

Peninsula Gem and Geology Society & Sequoia Gem and Mineral Society

Community Activities Building, 1400 Roosevelt Ave., Redwood City, CA 94061

Hours: 10am - 5pm

Contact: impresciacconstruction@gmail.com / 650-575-3144

Website: pggs.org/ / sequoiagemandmineralsociety.org

**October 17-18, 2026
 Santa Rosa, CA**

Santa Rosa Mineral and Gem Society

Santa Rosa Veteran's Memorial Building, 1351 Maple Ave., Santa Rosa, CA

Hours: Saturday 10am - 6pm

Sunday 10am - 5pm

Adults \$8, Kids under 12 Free, Free Parking; 49th annual show. There are over 35 vendors selling gems, minerals, jewelry, lapidary rough, meteorites and other rock-related items. Educational displays, raffle, mineral exhibits, silent auctions, and lapidary demonstrations. Kid's Corner with Parent & Me activities and treasure hunt.

Food truck vendors are on-site; contact Victoria Commons; Email: agatejasper221@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.srmgs.org>

**November 14-15, 2026
 Concord, CA**

Contra Costa Mineral and Gem Society

Centre Concord, 5298 Clayton Road, Concord, CA

Hours: Saturday 10am - 5pm

Sunday 10am - 4pm

Admission \$10 Kids under 12 free, Senior discount; Tickets can be purchased online. Over 30

vendors - Rocks, minerals, fossils, gemstones, silent auction, rocks by the bucket, professional demonstrators, rock ID with experts, display cases, Spin the Wheel, rock painting, treasure box dig, rock monster, door prizes & raffle ; contact Mike Hopkins, (925) 570-4719; Email: show@ccmgsclub.com

Website: www.ccmgsclub.com

[Click here for LaBrea Tar Pits Museum Info \(right image\)](#)



**58TH ANNUAL
 ORCUTT MINERAL SOCIETY**

**ROCK
 &
 GEM
 SHOW**



**July 31st
 10am to 5 pm
 August 1st
 10am to 5 pm
 August 2nd
 10am to 4 pm**

**OVER 60 DEALERS
 DISPLAYS
 LAPIDARY ARTS
 DEMONSTRATIONS
 RAFFLE ON SUNDAY
 KID'S ACTIVITIES
 FREE ADMISSION AND PARKING**

**NIPOMO HIGH SCHOOL
 525 N. THOMPSON AVE
 NIPOMO, CA 93444
omsrockandgemshow.org**



Unearthed: Raw Beauty — A Must-See Mineral Experience for Rockhounds

Beth Walls, SLR

For anyone who has ever paused on a trail to pick up an interesting stone... turned a mineral specimen in the sunlight just to watch it flash... or lost track of time at a club show digging through flats of agates and crystals... **Unearthed: Raw Beauty** at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County feels like it was created especially for you.

Now on view through April 18, 2027, **Unearthed: Raw Beauty** showcases some of the largest, rarest, and most spectacular mineral specimens ever displayed in their natural, uncut form. Many are being shown publicly for the very first time.

What makes this exhibit especially exciting for rockhounds is its focus on raw mineral beauty. Visitors are greeted by minerals exactly as nature created them—massive crystal clusters, towering formations, shimmering geodes, and specimens whose shapes feel almost impossible to believe.

One of the showstoppers is the famous Chrysanthemum Stone, weighing over 900 pounds, where celestine crystals bloom across black shale like giant stone flowers.

Nearby, enormous amethyst geodes glitter with deep violet crystal interiors, and delicate blue tourmalines seem almost electric under the exhibit lighting.

For California collectors, the exhibit feels especially close to home. **Unearthed** highlights several of our state's geological treasures, including: vivid benitoite, California's state gemstone
brilliant pink kunzite
orange spessartine garnet
natural crystalline gold, California's state mineral
rare blue-cap tourmalines discovered near San Diego County and reunited for display.

Seeing these specimens gathered together is a reminder of just how extraordinary California's mineral heritage truly is.

One of the best parts of the exhibit is how beautifully it balances geology and aesthetics. Every case invites two reactions at once: **First:** How did nature make that? **Second:** How can something so scientific look so artistic?

The exhibition treats minerals not only as geological specimens but as natural sculpture. Crystal form, color, chemistry, and geologic origin are explained in ways that are approachable while still fascinating for experienced collectors.

It's easy to leave inspired not just to admire minerals, but to learn more about how they formed.



Above: Emerald (green beryl)
Wenshan, Yunnan Province, China, 124 Million years old



Above: Stibnite crystals are full of the metal antimony, which gives them their metallic sheen. They form in cracks when hot, mineral rich water starts to cool. This huge specimen is just one piece from a much larger discovery. When miners found a room-sized pocket covered in metallic crystals, they decided to preserve the stibnite-rather than grind up the crystals to get the antimony ore inside.

Wuning Mine, Jiangxi Province, China
115 million years old



Above: Caves create space to grow.

This aragonite "wave" is actually upside down; these stalactites originally formed on the ceiling of a cave. Water flowing through the earth grew this mineral drip by drip over thousands of years.

Werohan Mine, Yunzao Province China
Less than 65,000 years old

Unearthed: Raw Beauty (continued)

For rockhounds, **Unearthed: Raw Beauty** is more than a museum visit—it's fuel for the collecting spirit. This exhibit reminds us why rockhounding never really loses its magic.

Every specimen began underground, hidden in darkness, shaped slowly over immense spans of time. Now those same minerals sit illuminated for us to admire—revealing color, geometry, and natural artistry that no human hand could invent.

If you're visiting Los Angeles in the coming months, this exhibit is well worth the trip. Bring your curiosity... and if you're like most rockhounds, leave extra room in your imagination for the next specimen you hope to find yourself.

More information about the exhibit is available on the [Natural History Museum's Unearthed: Raw Beauty page](#).



Above: thumbnail mineral specimen display.



Left: This one we could touch! This rock is called pegmatite. When hot magma cools slowly inside the earth, crystals have time to grow really big. They form pegmatite rock from many different minerals. 50-60 million years old

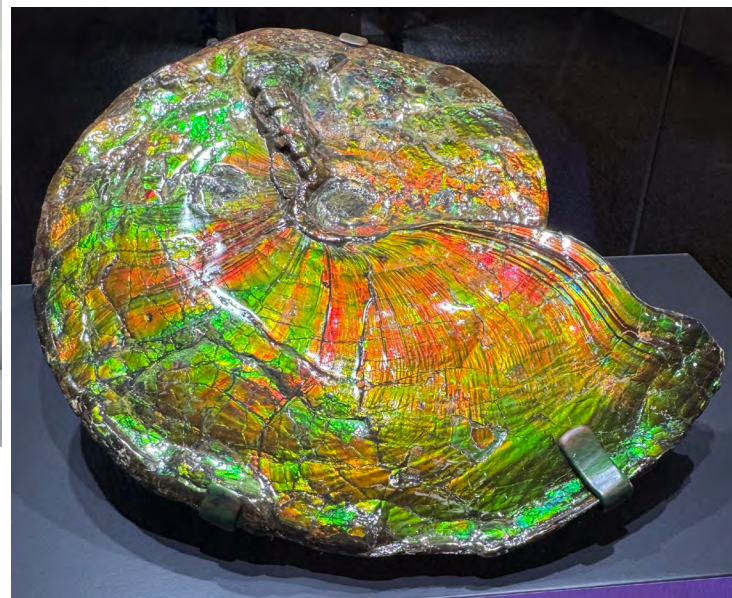


Left: Turquoise Hubei Province, China 3-6 million years old

Below: Bones and shells are partially made of minerals. When animals die, more minerals can replace their skeletons, creating fossils like this ammonoid. Its colorful sheen is made from very thin layers of aragonite, the same mineral in pearls. Ammonoid fossil covered in aragonite Placenticerias meeki Bearpaw Formation Alberta, Canada 71 million years old



Left: Stibiconite replacing stibnite Xikuanshan Mine Hunan Province, China 400,000 years old

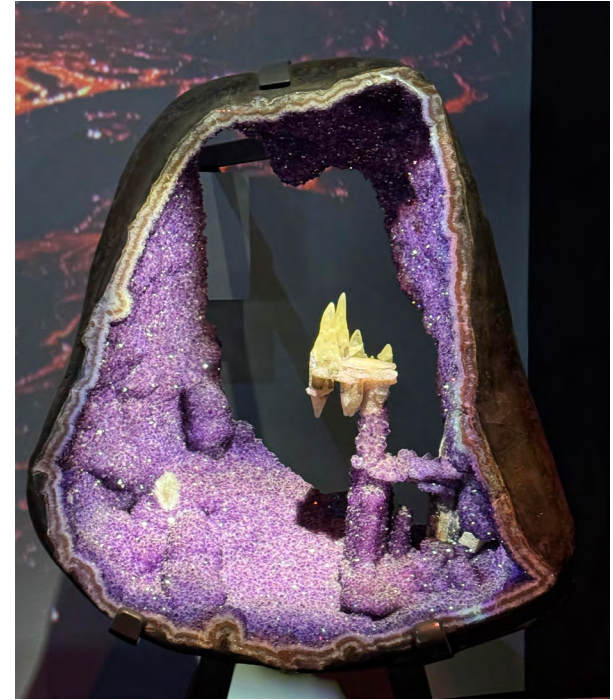


Photos by Beth Walls
Captions from the exhibit

Unearthed: Raw Beauty (continued)



Above: The natural shape of gold. We use gold every day in our jewelry and electronics, but we rarely see the natural shapes of this mineral. Scientists and miners had to explore deep underground to discover and carefully preserve these amazing crystals of pure gold.
 "The Flame" Gold
 Mother Lode District
 El Dorado County, California
 122-152 million years old



Above: Amazing minerals are rare. Minerals are in rocks, in our bodies, in our food, and in the things we make. Although minerals are all around us, exceptional mineral specimens are very rare. Normally, minerals don't have the time or room to grow large, beautiful crystals. Conditions have to be just right. The rare minerals in this exhibition are some of the most beautiful ever discovered.

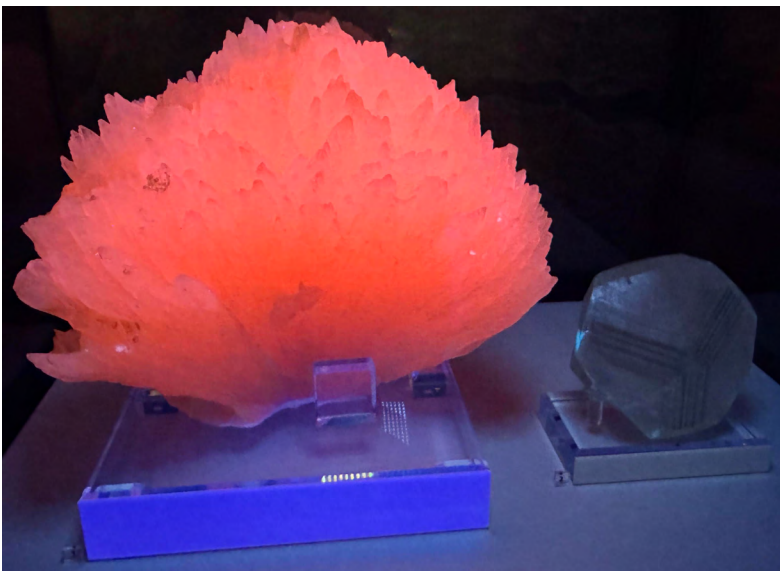
Long ago, hot lava erupted from a volcano. Gas bubbles became empty pockets as the lava cooled into solid rock. Later, silica-rich water seeped into the pockets, growing quartz crystals. Finally, a tiny amount of natural radiation turned these crystals purple, into amethyst. Miners dug these pockets out of the ground and cut them in half to see inside.

Amethyst (purple quartz) with calcite, Artigas Department, Uruguay, 80 million years old

Below Left and Right: UV light makes this mineral glow.

Tiny amounts of material can change the colors in minerals and even make them glow in ultraviolet (UV) light. The white calcite crystal is almost pure; it doesn't glow much. But watch how small amounts of the metal manganese turn calcite pink and make it glow red in UV light.

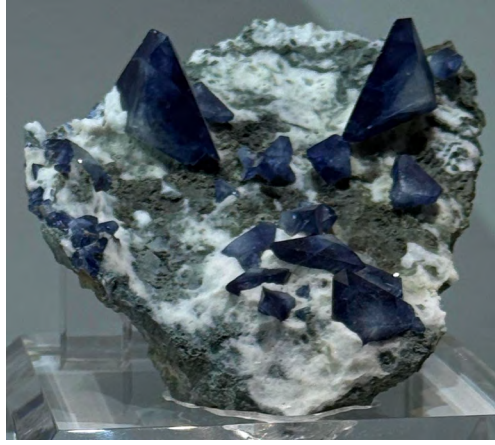
1. (on the left in each photo) Calcite with manganese inclusions, Huanggang Mines Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China 132-136 million years old
2. (on the right in each photo) Calcite with pyrite inclusions, Chenzhou City Hunan Province, China 140-170 million years old



Unearthed: Raw Beauty (continued)



Above: Quartz with rutile inclusions
Fianarantsoa Province, Madagascar
Carved in China



Above: Benitoite on natrolite
California State Gem Mine
San Benito County, California
10-15 million years old



Above: Benitoite necklace
with diamonds
California State Gem Mine
San Benito County, California
Made by John Ip, Bernadine Johnston, and Buzz Gray

Below: In this specimen, many small amethyst crystals surround a single large, white calcite crystal. In the pocket where these minerals grew, the amethyst started forming crystals first. The calcite grew later and more slowly. It had time to form one large crystal. Calcite and amethyst (purple quartz)
Artigas Department, Uruguay
134 million years old



Left: Goethite on calcite with amethyst
Andre Jachetti Mine
Artigas Department, Uruguay
134 million years old



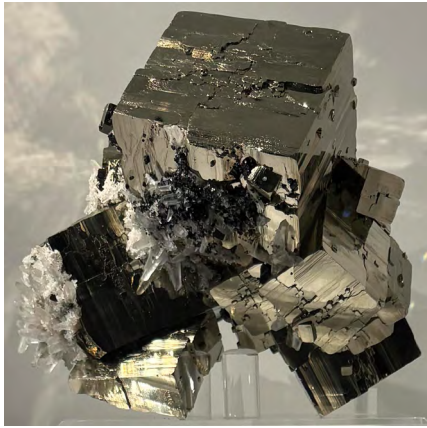
Below Left and Right: Tourmaline on albite with quartz
Tourmaline Queen Mine, San Diego County, California 100 million years old



Unearthed: Raw Beauty (continued)



Above: Pyrite
Navajún, La Rioja, Spain
85-110 million years old



Above: Pyrite
Ianzala Mine, Ancash, Peru
9 million years old



Above: Pyrite
Huanzala Mine, Ancash, Peru
9 million years old



Above: Malachite with azurite
Shilu Mine
Guangdong Province, China
100-105 million years old

Right: Fluorite in quartz
De'an Fluorite Mine, Jiangxi
Province, China
135 million years old



Left: Changing conditions
alter color.

Crystals grow using the materials around them. If those materials change while they are growing, crystals can develop multiple color zones as seen in this fluorite. The green is from the metal yttrium and the purple is caused by iron.

Fluorite with calcite
Yaogangxian Mine
Hunan Province, China
153-157 million years old

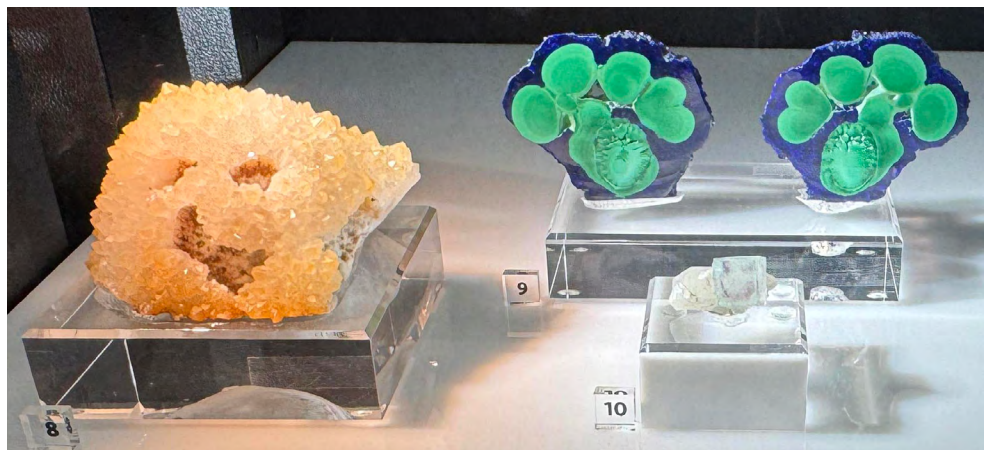


Below: 8. Quartz replacing fluorite, Jiangxi Province, China

9. Malachite with azurite Lufengshan Mine, Anhui Province, China

10. Fluorite, Yaogangxian Mine, Hunan Province, China

Below: 2. Azurite with malachite
Liufengshan Mine
Anhui Province, China 3 million years old



CFMS - Cooperative Field Trip Chairman Association

**Rick Hicks, CFMS
Representative**

Santa Lucia Rockhounds is now a member of the Cooperative Field Trip Chairmen Association's <https://www.co-opfieldtrips.com/>

We can now attend Co-Op field trips. There are some basic rules.

Conditions of Attending Trip:

1. All attendees must agree to abide by the AFMS Code of Ethics, the directions of the field trip leader and practice safe rock hounding.

2. Call the field trip leader beforehand to sign up and for further information. Remember to wear your name badge and sign in and out with the field trip leader (unless specified by Leader).

3. A Consent and Assumption of Risk Waiver of Liability form must be signed upon arrival at meeting site.

4. If you are NOT a member of a CLUB/SOCIETY that belongs to the California Federation Mineralogical Society (CMFS), you must contact the FT leader before the field trip regarding insurance requirements

This is the next upcoming Fieldtrip. A "CO-OP MEMBER" Field Trip to Central Oregon

COLLECTION MATERIAL – Obsidian, limb casts, jasper, petrified wood, geodes & thundereggs

WHEN – June 13 - June 21st, 2026
SPONSOR CLUB – Mother Lode Mineral Society & Calaveras Gem & Mineral

Contact the Co-op or sponsoring club field trip leader for updates and further information. Click on About tab above for club contact information. I also have contact information available.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE

June 13-Arrival day, make plans
June 14-17 Group choice
Prineville club's daily outings-Go to the Prineville Club's Facebook page for more info on each field trip. \$10 club membership required but is good for the whole year.

Either Kevin or I will be going on the field trips but the club field trip leaders will be in charge and you must check in and out with them.

[Prineville Rockhound Powwow Show](#)

June 18- Friends Ranch-Private property dig for t-eggs, and/or Hampton Butte Petrified wood and jasper.

We will be attending the Central Oregon Rock Collectors (CORC) monthly meeting. Guests invited.

June 19-Fallen Tree-T-egg claim not open to public. Agate centers and /or White Fir- Club claim T-eggs

June 20-Friends Ranch-Private property dig for t-eggs and/or Bear Creek-Petrified wood,
June 21-Fallen Tree-T-egg claim not open to public.

Agate centers and /or Congleton Hollow-Petrified wood and limb casts.

NOTE: I have to check out early this morning so I suggest you stay in a motel close to the fairgrounds or dig site. Also see Additional Opportunity below.

June-18-21 Prineville show- No charge to visit the show. Rocks cost up to \$1,000. LOL, ask me how I know.

June 20 For those staying at Janet's house pack up and leave. Unfortunately, I didn't reserve the house soon enough to be able to stay for the entire show. I have to be out early Sunday morning so I'm asking people to leave or at least pack up on Saturday as I will need time to clean up and lock up. But you can still attend the field trips or show.

June 20-21-Additional Opportunity: [Oregon Sunstone Extravaganza!](#) Spectrum Sunstone Mine/Chris Rose/ Neukomm's Rock Shop is having a FREE dig Saturday 6/21 and reduced price of \$20 for adults on Sunday June 21.

There will also be FREE belt runs, rock swap FREE camping and flush toilets. You must be a member of the [Oregon Sunstone Facebook group](#) and indicate you are attending.

CFMS - June Updates

Rick Hicks, CFMS Representative

Need for Youth Judges!

Judges for our CFMS Junior Achievement Awards contest. Rules call for members from three different CFMS clubs to serve as judges so as to avoid bias in evaluating applicants.

One of this year's applicants is from my own Ventura club, so I need to recuse myself. Kids who have entered this year hail from the Mojave Desert Gem & Mineral Society, Pasadena Lapidary Society, and Ventura Gem & Mineral Society, so I need three judges who are not members of these clubs.

Can you help? Please?

These awards acknowledge kids in two age groups: under 12 and 12-to-18. Kids submit applications and winners earn a Certificate-of-Achievement and \$100.

This year, we have four applicants, two in each age group. And yet, despite asking each month for four months now, we still have no judges.

I try to be an optimist. But my optimism is fading because it's starting to seem like no one cares. Please, prove me wrong.

The judging sheet is short and straightforward, so the task is not a huge one. You should be able to complete it in one quick sit-down session.

This year's CFMS Convention won't take place until the end of September, you'll be given ample time for judging.

Let's all join together to recognize the outstanding kids within our ranks! Please: take time to contact me right now (as in, this very moment) to volunteer your help: jbraceth@roadrunner.com.

I still believe in heroes, and I know you're out there. Let the four kids who have taken the time and effort to support their clubs know that their efforts are valued and will be honored.

CFMS Show & Convention in Reno, September 18-20, 2026

In conjunction with Reno Gem & Mineral Society's "Jackpot of Gems" Show

Reno-Sparks Convention Center
Friday & Saturday - Show Open:
10:00 AM-7:00 PM

Sunday - Show Open: 10:00 AM-5:00pm

Opportunities for members to participate. There's lots of good rock hounding nearby too. It's not too soon to start planning your competitive and non-competitive exhibits.

Contact Rick Hicks
I'll have copies of the forms and more information at the next meeting

DONATIONS

Donations to any of the funds administered by CFMS and/or AFMS are tax deductible under the rules governing tax exempt

organizations which are 501(c)(3).

Your cancelled check or receipt is considered to be proof of your donation for purposes of filing your federal tax return.

If a personal donation is \$250 or more, a letter attesting to that amount is also required. Member clubs and individuals are encouraged to donate to any of the following:
CFMS Scholarship Fund
CFMS Endowment Fund
CFMS General Fund
Diedrick Memorial Scholarship Fund
AFMS Scholarship Foundation
AFMS Endowment Fund
Burns Memorial Camp Fund (benefits Earth Science Studies)
Facilities Development Fund

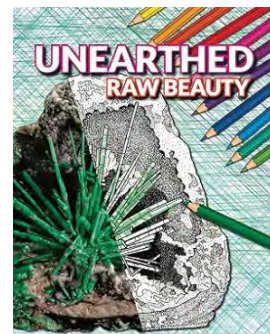
Your donations should be sent to: Pat LaRue, Exec. Sec/Treas
PO Box 1657 Rialto, CA 92377-1657

Receipts and any supporting documents will be forwarded on to the committee member responsible for acknowledgment.

Please make all checks payable to CFMS or AFMS as appropriate and note the fund in the memo section.



Left: The Exhibit Book can be found [here](#) on Amazon- or buy it in the gift shop when you visit. (Image from Amazon)



Above: The Exhibit Coloring Book can be found [here](#) on Amazon- or buy it in the gift shop when you visit. (Image from Amazon)

2026 CFMS SHOW & CONVENTION

“Jackpot of Gems”



September 18, 19 & 20, 2026
(Fri./Sat., 10am–7pm; Sun., 10am–5pm)
Reno-Sparks Convention Center
4590 S. Virginia St, Reno, NV 89502

COMPETITIVE EXHIBIT ENTRY FORM

Exhibit Entry Deadline: August 1, 2026

SETUP: All entries must be ready for judging by close of set-up time 8 pm, Thursday, September 17, 2026. Set up time will be Thursday, September 17, 2026 from Noon to 6:00pm

CASES: Cases will be assigned space on tables approximately 30 inches high. Exhibits are limited to 150 watts of power per case, and exhibitor must supply a three prong extension cord to reach the power supply under the tables (approximately 10 feet).

Please complete all information on the entry form and this certification form and mail to the Competitive Exhibits Registrar for acceptance and acknowledgement – ***an email copy may be sent, but a hard copy with all signatures is required for entry.*** Mail to:

Pat LaRue, Competitive Exhibit Registrar
P.O. Box 1657
Rialto, CA 92377-1657
bplarue@earthlink.net

Address questions to **Colleen McGann, Rules Chair, 189 El Solvo, Avenue #2, Ben Lomond, CA 95005, Kmcgann0009@gmail.com**. There are no separate application forms for CFMS Supplementary Competition. Fill out this form for the competition you wish to enter. **You must fill out a separate application for each entry.**

Refer to AFMS Rules Updated to 2024. Download the rules from: www.amfed.org Basic info on CFMS Supplemental Trophies may be obtained from the CFMS website, www.cfmsinc.org (Supplementary Rules). If you are uncertain as to the class or group you should enter or for clarification of rules, contact Colleen McGann: Kmcgann0009@gmail.com , (831) 212-1951.

LIABILITY: It is mutually agreed that California Federation of Mineralogical Societies, AFMS, & the host society will not be liable to any exhibitor in whole or part. This includes the property of the exhibitor or injury to their person resulting from any cause. Submitting this signed application/certification form for entry constitutes acceptance of these rules and regulations.

SIGNATURE _____

Print name _____ **Date** _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

SOCIETY & REGION _____

JUNIOR ONLY: DATE OF BIRTH _____

DISPLAY DESCRIPTION _____

EXHIBITOR GROUP: MASTER _____ ADVANCED _____ NOVICE _____ JUNIOR _____
SOCIETY _____ JUNIOR SOCIETY _____

EXHIBIT DIVISION _____ EXHIBIT CLASS _____

This display is to be entered in: CFMS _____ CFMS Supplemental _____

A limited number of cases are available for loan at a \$15 fee if you lack your own case.

Using your own case? ___ If yes, external dimensions in inches: Width _____ Height _____ Depth _____

Do you need a case? ___ (Rental cases may vary slightly, with an inside bottom approx. 46" x 22")

If you wish to be considered for a CFMS SUPPLEMENTAL TROPHY, please note which one/s here:

Have you judged at annual CFMS shows? ___ If so, what categories? _____

Would you like to volunteer as a clerk? ___ Would you like to volunteer as a judge-in-training? ___

Are you a certified AFMS Judge cardholder? ___ If so, what categories? _____

CERTIFICATION FOR EXHIBITORS

I hereby certify all material in competition by me is my own personal property. If a Society Exhibit, all material belongs to members of the Society. All work, except minor findings or where otherwise allowed by the rules, was completed by me. **I have read the current rules and agree to abide by them.**

Exhibitor's Signature _____

Print name _____

Exhibitor's Society & Region _____

OFFICER'S CERTIFICATION: I certify, as an officer of the above named society, that the exhibitor is a member in good standing of that society, and to the best of my knowledge is eligible to exhibit in the stated classification according to AFMS Rules.

Signature _____ Title _____

If certification is sent by email, we need the officer's email _____

Date _____

Both pages must be sent to Competitive Exhibit Registrar. Be sure to make a copy for your files.

By attending this activity I give consent for CFMS to make photographs, videotapes, films or other likenesses of me. I hereby grant to sponsor unrestricted right to copyright any of the above mentioned materials containing images of me as well as the unrestricted right to use and reuse them, with their caption information, in whole or in part. These rights include but not limited to the right to publish, copy, distribute, alter, license and publicly display these materials and images for editorial, trade, marketing and/or advertising purposes. I also grant CFMS and its licensees the unrestricted right to use and disclose my name in connection with use of the above material.



JACKPOT of Gems Show 2026

2026 CFMS CONVENTION

In conjunction with the Reno Gem & Mineral Society's "Jackpot of Gems" Show
September 18, 19 & 20, 2026
(Friday & Saturday 10am-7pm; Sunday 10am-5pm)
Reno-Sparks Convention Center
4590 S. Virginia St., Reno, NV 89502

NON-COMPETITIVE EXHIBIT ENTRY FORM

Exhibit Entry Deadline: August 1, 2026

SET-UP: Exhibits must be installed between Noon and 6 PM on Thursday, September 17, 2026

CASES: Cases will be assigned space on tables approximately 30 inches high. Exhibits are limited to 150 watts of power per case, and exhibitor must supply a three prong extension cord to reach the power supply under the tables (approximately 10 feet).

Please complete all information on the entry form and mail to the Non-Competitive Exhibit Chair for acceptance and acknowledgement – **an email copy may be sent.** Mail to:

Kelly Plumb Non-Competitive Exhibit Chair, c/o Reno Gem & Mineral Society

480 S. Rock Blvd., Sparks, NV 89431

email: kellyplumb900@yahoo.com Phone: 510-693-9075

If entering more than one exhibit, you must fill out a separate application for each exhibit.

LIABILITY: It is mutually agreed that California Federation of Mineralogical Societies and the Reno Gem & Mineral Society will not be liable to any exhibitor in whole or part. This includes the property of the exhibitor or injury to their person resulting from any cause. Submitting this signed application/certification form for entry constitutes acceptance of these rules and regulations.

SIGNATURE _____

Print name _____ **Date** _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ **EMAIL** _____

SOCIETY & REGIONAL FEDERATION _____

DISPLAY DESCRIPTION _____

A limited number of cases are available for loan at a \$15 fee if you lack your own case.

Using your own case? ___ If yes, external dimensions in inches: Width ___ Height ___ Depth ___

Do you need a case? ___ (2'x4' rental cases may vary slightly)

June Birthstones: Pearl, Alexandrite, & Moonstone

Beth Walls, SLR

June is a special month when it comes to birthstones—it is one of the few months that boasts more than one gem.

Those born in June can choose from pearl, alexandrite, or moonstone—each with its own unique beauty, lore, and symbolism. This trio of gems offers a variety of styles and colors to suit different personalities and tastes.

Pearl: The Classic Choice

History & Lore

Pearls are the oldest known gems and have been admired for their natural beauty for thousands of years. Unlike most gemstones, pearls are organic, formed within mollusks in oceans, lakes, or rivers. In ancient times, they were considered symbols of purity and wealth, often worn by royalty and aristocrats.

Symbolism

Purity
Wisdom
Integrity

Pearls are often associated with serenity and elegance. They are also traditionally gifted at weddings and anniversaries.

Varieties

Natural Pearls – Rare and extremely valuable.
Cultured Pearls – More common and widely used in



Left to Right: Alexandrite, Pearl, Moonstone
<https://www.gia.edu/birthstones/june-birthstones>

COURTESY: D HUMPHREY (RIGHT)

jewelry.
Freshwater vs. Saltwater Pearls –
Differ in luster, shape, and size.

Alexandrite: The Mysterious Chameleon

History & Lore

Discovered in Russia in the 1830s, alexandrite is famed for its remarkable ****color-changing**** property—green in daylight and red under incandescent light. This rare gemstone was named after Czar Alexander II and quickly became associated with Russian royalty.

Symbolism

Luck
Balance
Transformation

Because of its dual colors, alexandrite is often linked to duality and change, making it a powerful stone for those embracing new phases of life.

Rarity

Alexandrite is among the rarest and most valuable gemstones, especially in its natural form. Lab-created versions are more affordable and widely available.

Moonstone: The Ethereal Glow

History & Lore

Moonstone has been admired across cultures, often linked to lunar deities and mystical powers. In Hindu mythology, it's said to be made from solidified moonbeams. The Romans believed it was born from drops of moonlight.

Symbolism

Intuition
Dreams
Feminine Energy

Moonstone's soft glow—called adularescence—gives it a dreamy quality that has enchanted wearers for centuries.

Uses

Moonstone is commonly used in bohemian and artistic jewelry styles. It's popular in rings, pendants, and bracelets.

June's birthstones—pearl, alexandrite, and moonstone—offer a rich palette of beauty and meaning. Each gem reflects a different facet of June's unique energy.

The Golden Bear: a Small Nugget with a Big Story

Beth Walls, SLR

Walking through the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, it's easy to get distracted by giant dinosaur skeletons and sparkling gems. Tucked among all that natural history is something much smaller that still grabs your attention right away: the CFMS Golden Bear.

At first glance, it looks like just a gold nugget, but once you hear its story, it becomes way more than that.

The Golden Bear is a naturally shaped gold nugget that resembles a bear, which makes it especially meaningful to the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies. According to CFMS history, the nugget was found in California during the Gold Rush era and later became the official symbol of the federation.

It's considered one of the most treasured pieces in California mineralogical history.

What makes seeing it at the museum so cool is that it connects California geology, mining history, and rockhounding all in one display. Gold is exciting because of how rare and valuable it is, but this nugget is even more special because nature shaped it into something recognizable. It almost doesn't seem real until you're standing there looking at it.

For rockhounds, the display reminds us that amazing discoveries aren't only found in textbooks or behind glass cases. They started with someone out in the field noticing something unusual and picking it up. That's part of what makes rockhounding so fun. You never know what you might find.

The Golden Bear also represents California's connection to minerals and mining. Gold helped shape the history of the state, but pieces like this tell the story in a way that feels more human and memorable. It's about discovery, curiosity, and appreciating the beauty hidden in nature.

Even in a museum full of huge displays, the CFMS Golden Bear is an example that sometimes the smallest exhibit can leave the biggest impression. For anyone interested in rocks, minerals, or California history, it's definitely worth checking out.



Above: The Golden Bear on display at the Los Angeles Natural History Museum.

Photo by Beth Walls

The Santa Lucia Rockhounds (SLR)

is a non-profit public benefit corporation with the specific purpose to promote the study of mineralogy, including (but not limited to) the fields of lapidary, metal working, jewelry design and fabrication, geology and conducts field trips for collecting and education.

We encourage learning and good citizenship in a congenial atmosphere. We respect both private and public property, and we strive to protect natural resources.

The Junior Rockhound meeting is held on the third Monday of each month at 6 p.m. with the general club meeting starting at 7p.m. All meetings are at the Templeton Community Center.

We are a member of the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies (CFMS) and affiliated with the American Federation on Mineralogical Societies (AFMS). Santa Lucia Rockhounds, Inc. is also a member of the American Lands Access Association (ALAA).

Annual dues are \$30 for the first adult plus \$10 per additional member of the same household. Annual dues are payable between August 1 and the third Monday of December, in person at club meetings or by mail to P.O. Box 1672, Paso Robles, CA 93447.

The Rockonteur is the official monthly newsletter of the SLR and an independent publication containing news and information consistent with the mission of SLR and of interests to its members.

Circulation of the Rockonteur is approximately 120 copies per issue.

Member submissions are encouraged and may be sent to the editor. We reserve the right to accept or refuse submissions inconsistent with the objectives and purpose of the SLR.

Submissions may be edited as needed without consent. The deadline is the 20th of the month to be included in the next month's publication. Early submissions are highly appreciated and strongly encouraged.

Newsletter Editor/Publisher: Beth Walls, bethwalls31@gmail.com Please submit articles for the Rockonteur via email before the 15th of the month to be featured the following month.

Website: www.slrockhounds.org
Club Email: slrockhounds@gmail.com