

JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 2024

NEWSLETTER OF THE
SOUTH CENTRAL FEDERATION
Of Mineral Societies



Member of: American Federation of Mineral Societies



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SOUTH CENTRAL FEDERATION OF MINERAL SOCIETIES, INC.

2024 SCFMS OFFICERS

President: Don Shurtz

Executive V-P: Sigrid Stewart

Secretary: Empty

Treasurer: Henry Rojas

Web Master: Don Shurtz

**Exec. Secretary:
Liz Burford**

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

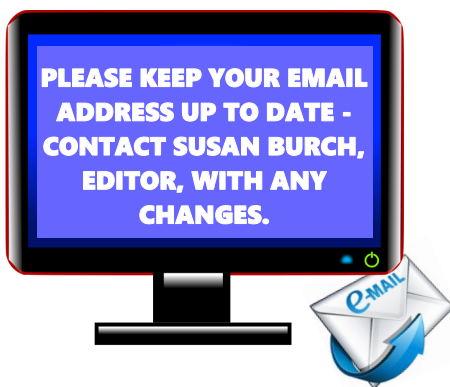
**SCFMS Endowment Fund
Treasurer: Walt Beneze**

**Nominating Committee –
Ron Carmen**

Past President: Roger Burford

**For more information or to send in-
formation 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
BI-MONTHLY**

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 20th 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 give me a call, but send newsletter content via email.

ANNUAL SHOW 2024

TBD

ANNUAL MEETING

TBD

**SCFMS WEB-SITE:
WWW.SCFMS.NET**

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

NEWSLETTER EDITOR/BEAC:

Susan Burch
scfmseditor@yahoo.com





master Chair, Website Contest Chair, Scholarship Chair, Executive Vice President, and now the SCFMS President.



Don Shurtz,
SCFMS President

My goals as the SCFMS President are to grow the interest of SCFMS members into becoming active in Club and SCFMS activities. We start the year without a SCFMS Secretary – a vital position that needs to be filled. We also have District Vice President positions to fill, some Committee Chair positions, and Committee member positions to be filled. It would be great if all these positions could be filled. We also need to support three different monetary funds that are supported by contributions. The SCFMS Endowment Fund exists to financially support the SCFMS. Each year the SCFMS Budget can request money from the interest to the Endowment Fund to balance our budget. The AFMS Endowment Fund exists to support the AFMS if financial needs occur. It also supports the AFMS Juniors programs. Finally, the AFMS Scholarship Foundation fund exists to support two scholarships per AFMS Region (except the Southeastern Federation which has its own scholarship fund). The two \$4,000.00 scholarships are awarded to graduate students working on an advanced degree in an Earth Science Field. These funds are supported by donations from clubs and members. I am particularly unwavering about supporting the AFMS Scholarship fund. Please see the article titled Scholarships that also appears in this edition of the SCFMS Newsletter for a special program for this year's donations to the AFMS Scholarship Foundation (Fund).

Suddenly it was Monday, January 1st, 2024, and I was the SCFMS President. That, quite frankly, scares the heck out of me. What am I supposed to do?

First, let me tell you a little bit about myself. I don't know when I picked up my first rock, but by the time I was 12 years old, I had quite a collection. About that time, my father also started being interested in rocks. He bought a used rock saw, built some equipment for cutting and polishing rocks, and eventually built his own faceting machine. Best of all, he let me use the rock saw and the cutting and polishing machines – I think that was when I was officially a Rockhound. I continued to cut and polish rocks until I left for college at the University of California with a Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps scholarship. Upon graduation, I was commissioned as an Officer in the U.S. Navy – my life for the next 20 years. My time at the University of California and in the U.S. Navy did not leave much time for Rockhounding, but the interest was still there in the background. My final duty station in the Navy was in Dallas, TX. I retired from the U.S. Navy in January 1989. I took 4 days off, then started my working life as a civilian on the same program I had been working on in my final Navy tour of duty. I have continued to live in the Dallas area since then. I am currently retired, but I am an active volunteer at the Perot Museum of Nature and Science where I am a docent in the Life, Then and Now (Dinosaur) Hall and the Gem and Mineral Hall. I have volunteered more than 500 hours per year for the last seven years, and plan to continue as long as I can.

While living in Dallas, my two daughters started picking up "pretty rocks" on the way to school, and that rekindled my active interest in Rockhounding. With a tumbler, we could make those "pretty rocks" into beautiful rocks. It also provided an excuse to take weekend trips to look for rocks. With some other equipment, we could cut and polish the rocks into stones suitable for jewelry. I joined the Pleasant Oaks Gem and Mineral Club and almost immediately became the editor of the Chips and Chatter newsletter. That led to involvement with the SCFMS for the Editor and Author Contests and later the Website Contests. In the SCFMS, I served as a District Vice President, Bulletin Editor Advisory Chair, SCFMS Web-



AFMS LAND USE POLICY

1. Adherence to the AFMS Code of Ethics assures compliance with most statutes and regulations governing collecting on public lands and encourages respect for private property rights and the environment. Clubs are urged to read the AFMS Code of Ethics in at least one meeting every year, to publish the Code frequently in the club newsletter, and to compel compliance on club field trips.
2. Individuals and clubs are urged to write their elected representatives and land use management agency supervisors regarding issues of rule making, legislation and enforcement affecting field collecting of minerals and fossils.
3. Individuals and clubs are urged to join and support activities of the American Lands Access Association (ALAA), a sister organization with responsibility for advancing the interests of earth science amateurs with legislatures and land use management agencies.
4. The AFMS will receive a report from ALAA at its annual meeting.
5. The AFMS endorses the principle of multiple use of public lands as a guarantee of continuing recreational opportunities.
6. Wilderness and monument designations are inconsistent with the principle of multiple use. In view of the vast amount of public land already designated as wilderness and monuments, future such designations should be minimal, taking into account the increased demand for recreational opportunities, including rockhounding, created by a growing population.
7. In furtherance of the principle of multiple use, the AFMS believes that laws, regulations and rules established by relevant governmental authorities should be designed to allow freest possible access to all public lands, coupled with minimal restrictions on the recreational collection of minerals, fossils, gemstone materials and other naturally occurring materials.
8. A right to collect minerals and fossils on public lands should be protected by statute.
9. The AFMS urges its members to work with any or all government authorities to achieve a good working relationship in order to improve the public image of recreational collectors.



AFMS CODE OF ETHICS

I will respect both private and public property and will do no collecting on privately owned land without the owner's permission. I will keep informed on all laws, regulations or rules governing collecting on public lands and will observe them. I will, to the best of my ability, ascertain the boundary lines of property on which I plan to collect. I will use no firearms or blasting material in collecting areas. I will cause no willful damage to property of any kind—fences, signs, buildings. I will leave all gates as found. I will build fires in designated or safe places only and will be certain they are completely extinguished before leaving the area. I will discard no burning material—matches, cigarettes, etc. I will fill all excavation holes, which may be dangerous to livestock. I will not contaminate wells, creeks or other water supply. I will cause no willful damage to collecting material and will take home only what I can reasonably use. I will practice conservation and undertake to utilize fully and well the materials I have collected and will recycle my surplus for the pleasure and benefit of others. I will support the rockhound project H.E.L.P. (Help Eliminate Litter Please) and will leave all collecting areas devoid of litter, regardless of how found. I will cooperate with field trip leaders and those in designated authority in all collecting areas. I will report to my club or Federation officers, Bureau of Land Management, or other authorities, any deposit of petrified wood or other materials on public lands which should be protected for the enjoyment of future generations for public educational and scientific purposes. I will appreciate and protect our heritage of natural resources. I will observe the "Golden Rule," will use "Good Outdoor Manners" and will at all times conduct myself in a manner which will add to the stature and public image of rock-hounds everywhere.



SAFETY AND THE CODE

Ellery Borow, AFMS Safety Chair

Among the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies publications is a 44-page Safety Manual. This Manual, however, is not the only safety program offered. Monthly, in the AFMS Newsletter, one may find articles discussing additional matters of safety in our shared hobby interests. While both of those sources of safety information are important threads in the fabric of the AFMS, there is another important document related to safety. That additional document is called the AFMS Code of Ethics. Yes, the AFMS Code of Ethics is also an important safety reference. With respect to the AFMS Code of Ethics:

- ◆ I will respect both private and public property and will do no collecting on privately owned land without the owner's permission.

What better way to be safe than to know where we are collecting and respecting that integrity.

- ◆ I will keep informed on all laws, regulations or rules governing collecting on public lands and will observe them.

Keeping informed of the laws and guidelines in our hobby is indeed part of being safe in all we do.

- ◆ I will, to the best of my ability, ascertain the boundary lines of property on which I plan to collect.

Again, knowing exactly ones location is also a matter of being safe – and respectful with what we do.

- ◆ I will use no firearms or blasting material in collecting areas.

Certainly this is meant to keep everyone safe.

- ◆ I will cause no willful damage to property of any kind – fences, signs, buildings.

This, too, is a matter of being safe and respectful of another's property.

- ◆ I will leave all gates as found.

Matters of safety are for all, and certainly for the critters inhabiting the property.

- ◆ I will build fires in designated or safe places only and will be certain they are completely extinguished before leaving the area.

There is a certain undeniable wisdom concerning this fire safety concern.

- ◆ I will discard no burning material – matches, cigarettes, etc.

Clearly a safety matter.

- ◆ I will fill all excavation holes, which may be dangerous to livestock.

Safety, safety, safety!

- ◆ I will not contaminate wells, creeks or other water supply.

Not just a matter of being respectful, but also to be safe for people, animals, and the environment.

- ◆ I will cause no willful damage to collecting material and will take home only what I can reasonably use.

While not specifically a matter of safety, this is a respectful and wise use of important hobby resources.

- ◆ I will practice conservation and undertake to utilize fully and well the materials I have collected and will recycle my surplus for the pleasure and benefit of others.

Ditto

- ◆ I will support the rockhound project H.E.L.P. (Help Eliminate Litter Please) and will leave all collecting areas devoid of litter, regardless of how found.

Litter is indeed a matter of safety – biological, broken glass, sharp metal and more.

- ◆ I will cooperate with field trip leaders and those in designated authority in all collecting areas.

One of the most important needs of our field trip leaders is with insuring the safety of everyone on the trip.

- ◆ I will report to my club or federation officers, Bureau of Land Management, or other authorities any deposit of petrified wood, or other materials on public lands which should be protected for the enjoyment of future generations for public educational and scientific purposes.

Safety, in this case, is in the preservation of resources.

- ◆ I will appreciate and protect our heritage of natural resources.

Yes, to keep resources safe is important.

- ◆ I will observe the "Golden Rule," will use "Good Outdoor Manners" and will at all times conduct myself in a manner which will add to the stature and public image of rockhounds everywhere.

How we conduct ourselves, how we inspire and demonstrate safety, and how we try to do the right thing in being safe is who we are and how we preserve our great hobby. Safety and staying safe are important parts of the fabric of the Federation. Please, be safe because your safety is good for all of us.

Via AFMS March 2024



Ellery Borow
AFMS Safety Chair

2024 WEBSITE CONTEST

Don Shurtz, SCFMS Website Contest Chair



The 2024 Website Contest is still in the works. I can tell you that the SCFMS Deadline for entries, in the hands of the Website Contest Chair, will be Monday, September 22, 2024. I previously had the closing date as September 30, 2024, but found that I needed to provide entry info to the AFMS by that day, so I reverted to a nearby Sunday (September 22). Don't tell the AFMS, but I will accept late entries up to September 30, 2024. The Contest Guidelines, Score Sheets, and Entry Forms are still in the works but are getting close to being finished. The AFMS Website Contest Chair has been putting in a lot of work and held numerous meetings with the Regional Website Contest Chairs to overhaul the contest. In the future, the judging emphasis will be on the effectiveness of the website, not on the quality or capabilities of the club. This should allow the smaller clubs to compete with the larger clubs. Attention to the details in the Guidelines and Scoresheet should yield a competitive entry for even the smallest clubs in the Regional Federations.

There will also be two categories for entering the contest. The first is the same as the prior contests – competitive entries. The second category will be for webmasters who want to improve their website but don't want to end up at the bottom of the winner's list as they know their site needs work. The non-competitive category will provide the same feedback from the judges but will be for the webmaster's personal use. We hope that entries in the non-competitive category will eventually become entries and winners in the competitive category.

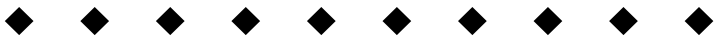
To quote from the draft contest guidelines, "The purpose of the contest is to help webmasters improve the effectiveness of their club's website to accomplish the following goals:

- Attract new members**
- Provide current members with timely information**
- Assist the club in fulfilling its mission**

VERY IMPORTANT: This contest is based on the effectiveness of the club's website in providing information for these goals; it is not based on the quality or capabilities of the club."

The current draft of the scoresheet has many of the previously existing requirements. As before, there will be bonus points awarded. However, these bonus points will deal with specific topics. This will make the bonus points less subjective. Finally, and new for 2024, there will be bonus points for "Outstanding Use of Technology. This includes online forms, search engines, a members-only area, plus other items.

I expect that the new guidelines, scorecard, and entry forms will be available before the end of February, possibly even in January. They will be on the AFMS Website and links will be added to the SCFMS Website Contest Page. I will also try to email each webmaster when the new material is posted.



SCHOLARSHIPS

Don Shurtz, SCFMS Scholarship Committee Chair

The SCFMS does not have its own scholarship fund. Instead, we participate in the AFMS Scholarship program. Each year the AFMS Scholarship Foundation awards two scholarships in each Regional Federation. Each scholarship is \$4,000 and is given to graduate students working on an advanced degree (Master's or Ph.D.) in an Earth Science field. Each federation names a Scholarship Honoree who either selects the students or works with his/her favorite school to identify two scholarship winners. For 2024, the Scholarship Honoree had to be named by December 31, 2024. It is the responsibility of the SCFMS Executive President to name the Honoree.



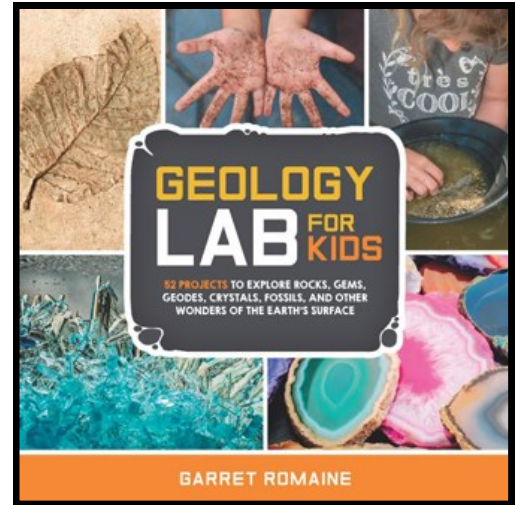
One of my last acts as the outgoing SCFMS Executive Vice President was to name Dr. Ron Tykoski as our Scholarship Honoree for 2024. Dr. Ron, as he is frequently called, is the Vice President of Science and Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology at the Perot Museum in Dallas, Texas. He received his Bachelor's Degree in geological science from the University of Michigan. While there he was also a docent at the University's Natural History Museum and a fossil preparator at the University of Michigan Museum of Paleontology. He received his Master's and Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin, Texas in geological sciences. After completing his Ph.D., Dr. Ron started his Paleontological Career as a fossil preparator at the Dallas Museum of Natural History (later to become part of the Perot Museum of Nature and Sci-

Continued from Page 7

ence). He supervised the fossil preparation of the Perot's Alaskan collection, the west Texas Alamosaurus neck vertebra, and the Ellis County Mammoth, Ellie May. He is now a Vice President for the Perot Museum responsible for science projects, Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology, paleontological research, collections, and the Gems and Mineral Hall. He has also participated in most of the local fossil collection activities including the Arlington Archosaur site, a sauropod fossil collection near Forestburg, TX, and a Tylosaurus collection at the North Sulphur River. Dr. Ron is a member of the Dallas Paleontological Society and the liaison between the Perot Museum and the Paleo Society.

Dr. Ron has worked with some of his colleagues from the University of Texas at Austin to select two students to receive the \$4,000.00 scholarships each. More on this will be published when the names are approved by the AFMS Scholarship Foundation.

I am adamant about education in science-related fields. To that end, I will do what I can to support the AFMS Scholarship Foundation. I serve as the SCFMS Scholarship Chair which means I am involved in soliciting donations for their scholarships. I am particularly unwavering about supporting the AFMS Scholarship fund. In years past, many SCFMS clubs made annual donations to support the fund. With the onset of COVID-19, these donations dried up – only the Rollin' Rock Club continues to donate year after year. I would like to get back to the days when SCFMS Clubs were regularly donating to the AFMS Scholarship Fund. To that end, I am going to create a matching donation for 2024. The goal is for each club to donate \$1.00 per member. For each club that donates at least \$1.00 per member, I will match twenty-five cents (\$0.25) for each member of the club. As an example, if a club has 100 members and donates \$100.00 to the AFMS scholarship fund, I will add \$25.00 to that donation. If that same club should donate \$200.00, the matching donation will remain at \$25.00 (25 cents per member). If you, the SCFMS members, want to get into my wallet for about \$750.00, get your club interested in making a donation. The donation must be from the club, but there are many ways you can generate that money. In our club, we have had rocks and equipment donated to the club. When these rocks and equipment are sold, fifty percent of the proceeds are donated to the AFMS Scholarship fund. Other means may be special items at a club's auction or silent auction, a percentage of the profits from your show or show's silent auction, passing the hat at a meeting, or even donating from your general funds. I will do what I can to support the AFMS Scholarship Foundation. How about you?



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



Make sedimentary rocks with your favorite ingredients. This is a conglomerate— a collection of bits and pieces of material, all glued together.



MATERIALS

- Mixing bowl
- 2 cups (312 g) of oats
- Medium saucepan
- 1/4 cup (55g) of butter
- 1/4 cup (85 g) of honey
- Glass baking dish
- Parchment paper
- 1/4 cup (65 g) of creamy peanut butter
- 1/4 cup (60 g) of brown sugar
- Wooden spoon or firm rubber spatula
- 1 teaspoon (5 ml) of vanilla extract
- 1 cup (25 g) of puffed rice cereal, such as Rice Krispies
- 1/2 cup (50 g) of pretzels, chopped up
- 1/4 cup (42 g) of tiny candy shell-covered chocolates, such as M&M's Minis

Continued on Page 9

Continued from Page 8



Safety Tips

- Be careful with glass mixing bowls.
- Ask an adult for help using the stove.

PROTOCOL

STEP 1: In a large bowl, mix your oats, puffed rice, pretzels, and mini candies. Note that the ingredients list can vary depending on what you like—you can substitute cashews, raisins, chocolate chips, bigger candies, etc. Just keep the proportions about the same. This mixture will be your clasts

STEP 2: In a medium saucepan, melt the “glue” for your conglomerate. Add the butter, honey, peanut butter, and brown sugar and bring it to a boil. Stir continuously so it doesn’t stick. Reduce the heat and let it simmer for three minutes and keep stirring. Remove from the heat and add the vanilla.

STEP 3: Add the glue, or matrix, to your clasts in the large mixing bowl and stir together until you have everything distributed throughout the mixture

STEP 4: Line the glass baking dish with parchment paper and add your mixture. Pack it down with your wooden spoon or rubber spatula so that it is nice and flat and even. You can add more candy, raisins, nuts, etc., at this point, either sprinkling them on top or pushing them in slightly.

STEP 5: Put in the refrigerator for about ten minutes, then remove and cut into squares or rectangles. Enjoy!



Creative Enrichment

1. Is it possible to have too many pieces of candy?



THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE FUN

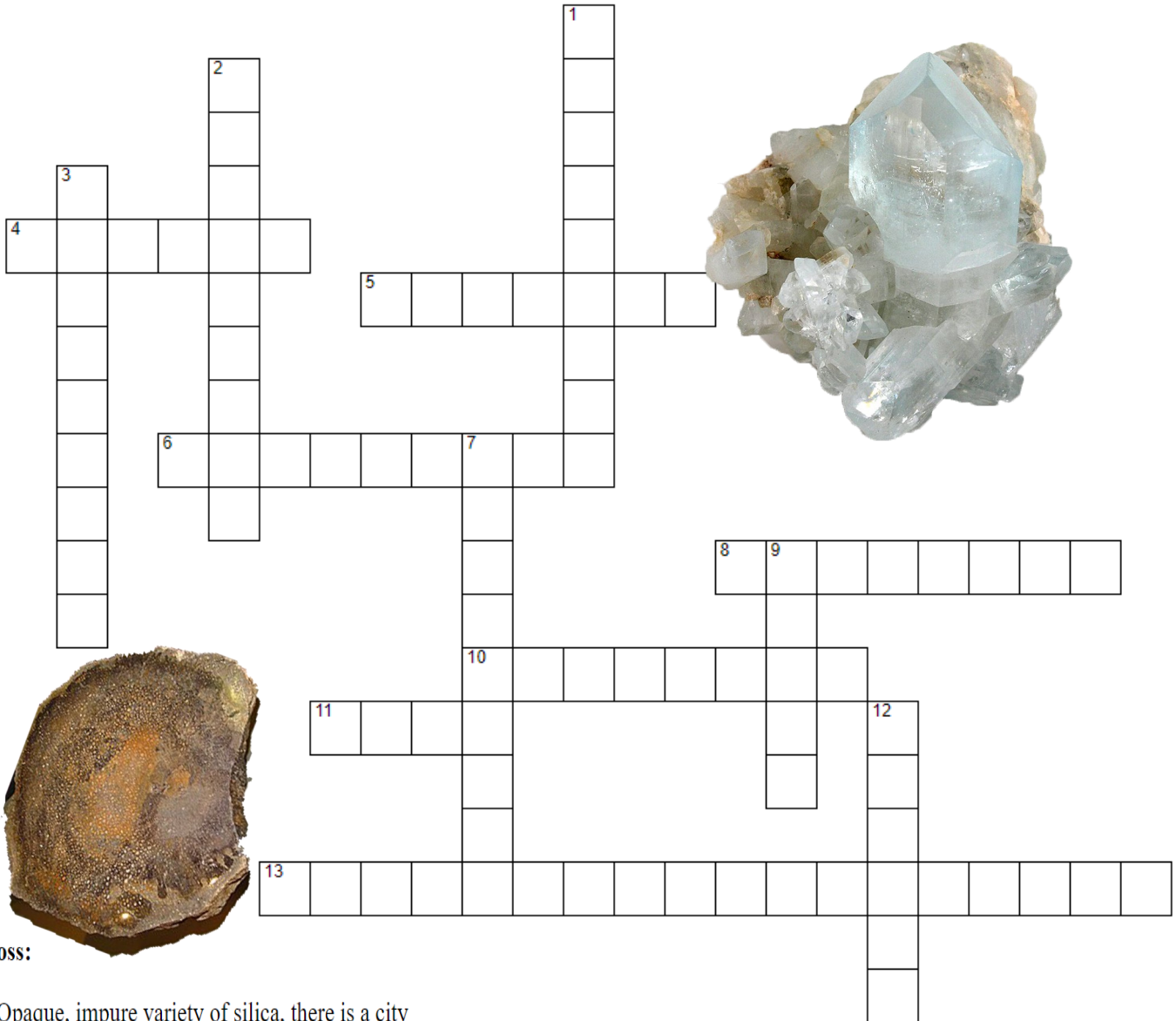
Conglomerates are common sedimentary rocks. They are usually composed of rounded pebbles of various sizes but at least 2 mm ($\frac{8}{100}$ "") in diameter or else they're just coarse sandstone. Sometimes conglomerates are glued together with such a hard, lime-rich matrix that they are very hard to break apart. Other times, they have way more rocky material (clasts) than they do matrix, and they crumble apart easily.

It takes very strong water current to move big rocks, and the size of the rocks in a conglomerate tells geolo-

gists a few things about where the conglomerate was made. If the pebbles and cobbles are not very eroded, they will still have sharp angles and corners, and the resulting rock is called a *breccia*. This usually means that the rocks have not traveled very far, and the water current when they were laid down was not very strong.

Gold miners often have to break up conglomerates to wash the gold out. Generally, the bigger the rocks in a stream, the bigger the gold. Conglomerates with large rocks in gold country are often a good sign!

Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas Gems and Minerals

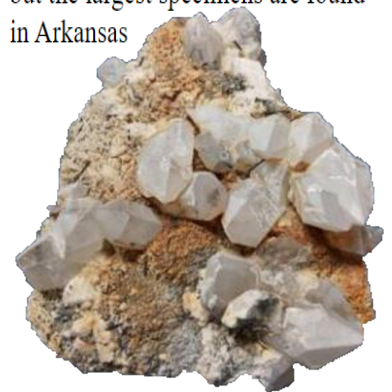


Across:

- 4. Opaque, impure variety of silica, there is a city named this in Texas and Arkansas.
- 5. State gem of Arkansas
- 6. Green secondary mineral common in aluminous low-grade metamorphic rocks and may be found in Arkansas
- 8. Also found in Louisiana, this is the petrified state stone of Texas
- 10. Rare water 'stone' found in southern Louisiana
- 11. Louisiana is the leading producer
- 13. State gem of Louisiana

Down:

- 1. copper/aluminum phosphate mineral found in Texas and Arkansas
- 2. State gem of Texas
- 3. Common rock of Louisiana
- 7. Common rock of Louisiana
- 9. Can be found in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas
- 12. Can be found in Louisiana and Texas but the largest specimens are found in Arkansas



Solution on

CLUB ROCKHOUND OF THE YEAR

How to CROY
Ellery Borow

We think, at the Club Rockhound of the Year committee, that it is always a good idea to thank the members of who are outstanding in how they support their club. In fact, the CROY program was specifically formed to give clubs an opportunity to publicly honor their outstanding members.

One of the questions asked of the committee is how does one select an honoree. First to note is that there is no formal procedure for making the selection. Here are some ways clubs make their choice of who to honor in their club for their CROY:

Club members nominates one or more of their outstanding members, and then the whole club votes on the nominees by secret ballot.

The club has a committee to select candidates for their CROY, and then the whole club votes, (or perhaps just the members of the committee vote).

A Board of Club Directors selects and agrees on who to select as their CROY honoree.

Sometimes it is the sole choice of the club president as to who to honor as the club honoree selection.

In some clubs, members earn “points” for specific items of service to the club and the person, or couple, with the most points is the club’s CROY honoree.

Other clubs have a member-at-large who secretly chooses the honoree.

No matter how the choice is made as to who to honor, it is the club’s choice as to method. It is also up to the club to decide as to what constitutes “outstanding”. The point is to thank outstanding members for what they do to help their club, and the CROY committee is just here to encourage clubs to participate that recognition.

Let’s keep the thank you’s flowing freely. Let’s recognize our amazing members. Next month (EFMLS NEWS, April 2024), details on how to participate in the CROY program, or contact me directly at rocknellery at fairpointdotnet.

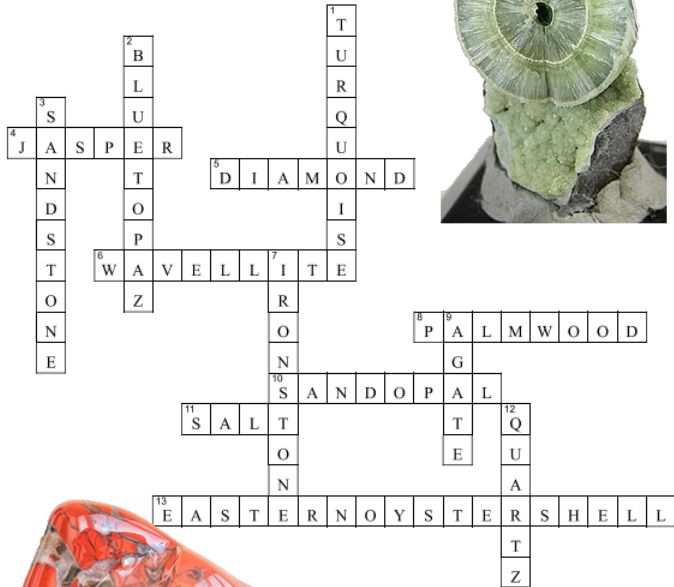
Via EFMLS NEWS, March 2024



GEOLOGIST	
Nutritional Facts	
Serving Size: 1 Fossil Hunting Geologist*	
Amount Per Serving	% Daily Value**
Rock Collecting	1000%
Fault Finding	400%
Being Gneiss	750%
Being Taken for Granite	0%
Easily Distracted by Rocks	500%
Alcohol Intake	400%

* Significant Source of Geology Puns
 ** Percent Daily Values are Based on Size of Your Rock collection

**ARKANSAS, LOUISIANA, AND TEXAS
GEM AND MINERALS PUZZLE SOLUTION**



**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 scfm-seditor@yahoo.com by the 20th of the month prior to the expected publication date and I would be glad to work with you to finalize your item for this newsletter.

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

Susan Burch, Editor

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Please, accept my apologies for the lateness of this issue. Health issues have impeded my regular activities and ability to keep up with responsibilities. Hopefully, I will do better in the future.

Stick with me for more issues filled with interesting articles and Pebble Pup content.

Susan

**DEADLINE
FOR THE
MARCH-APRIL, 2024
NEWSLETTER IS
FEBRUARY 20, 2024**

BENCH TIPS BY BRAD SMITH

TEMPLATES-Whenever I have to make more than 2-3 exact copies of a sheet metal component, I think of making a template. Templates let me easily draw the shape of an item to cut out.

Art stores or online sources like cooltools.us/ and kingsleynorth.com/ sell templates for common shapes like circles, ovals, hearts, etc. but for nonstandard shapes, I make my own out of a scrap of sheet plastic or sheet metal. My preference is brass. I carefully lay out the shape using a steel ruler, a set of dividers, a scribe, and a fine center punch.

One example is the brass template in the pic below that let's me quickly trace the design of ginkgo leaf earrings onto silver sheet. Another is the nickel template which makes it easy to drill a pattern of holes for pin inlay into wooden handles.



TESTING FOR SILVER-Often you need to identify some of those unknown "silvery" pieces of metal in the bottom of the toolbox or some piece of old jewelry that is not hallmarked. Is it silver or is it something else?

Of course, if you need to know exactly what you have, it's best to send your metals off for refining. But inexpensive silver testing solutions can be used to help distinguish higher silver content alloys from alloys that have the same appearance but with little to no silver content, like German Silver or Nickel.

I purchased a half-ounce bottle of JSP Silver Testing Solution #GT41. It's not a rigorous analytic test, but it lets you know if you're on the right track. And it's inexpensive. Mine was only \$3.

With a fresh solution you have an instant reaction after applying it to the metal being tested. The procedure is simple - apply a small drop and watch for a color change. Note that the acid will leave a slight mark, so choose a spot that is out of the way or will be easy to polish.

If you suspect the object is silver plated, you should file a little notch somewhere inconspicuous to expose what metal is below the surface. Otherwise, all you test will be the surface plating.

Here's the reaction I got when testing various materials:

- . Fine silver Red/Orange
- . Sterling silver Brick Red
- . 80% silver 20% copper . Dark red changing to gray
- . Brass Yellow changing to blue
- . Nickel Gray-green
- . Copper Yellow changing to blue
- . Steel Black
- . Stainless Steel No color change

Caution - If you do any of this testing, know that you are handling a reasonably strong acid. The GT41 label says it includes nitric acid and potassium dichromate.

- Wear safety glasses.
- Do not get any testing solution on your skin.
- Use a solution of baking soda and water to neutralize acid.
- Wash and clean up well when you're done.

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



UPCOMING SHOWS 2024

- March 4-5, Gulf Coast G&MS, RMB Regional Fairgrounds, Robstown, TX, www.gcgms.org
 - March 4-5, Big Spring Prospectors Club, Howard County Fair Barn, Big Spring, TX, www.facebook.com/bigspringprospectorsclub
 - March 16-17, Central Texas G&MS, Taylor County Expo Center, Display Building, Abilene, TX, www.facebook.com/p/Central-Texas-Gem-and-Mineral-Society-100082479451581/
 - April 6-7, San Antonio, TX, Southwest G&MS, Morris Center, SWMS.ORG
 - April 20- 21, Alpine, TX, Chihuahuan Desert G&MC, Alpine Civic Center, Alpine, TX, www.facebook.com/chihuahuan-desert-gem-mineral-club.
- ♦ Ref: Rock & Gem Show Dates, <https://www.rockngem.com/ShowDatesFiles/ShowDatesDisplayAll.php?ShowState=ALL>
 - ♦ Ref: SCFMS Website, Local Shows, www.scfms.net/local_shows.htm
 - ♦ Via Chips and Chatter, March 2024

To those who helped make
this issue possible...

Don Shultz
Ellery Borow
Garret Romaine
Brad Smith

