

Slab & Gab



July 2026

President's Message

July has arrived with all the color, warmth, and energy of summer—and this issue reminds us just how much life there is in our society.

From fireworks and rubies to field trips, fossils, ice cream, and fair preparations, this month is a celebration of discovery in every direction.

It is easy to forget that our hobby is not only about the stones we collect, cut, polish, and display. It is also about the spark of curiosity that keeps us learning.

That spark showed up beautifully in Bernie's sphere presentation, in the photos from San Simeon, and in the excitement building for upcoming field trips and the Kern County Fair.

Every demonstration, shared story, and member-submitted photo helps strengthen the fabric of SJVLS.



As we move through July, I encourage each of you to stay involved. Bring a topping to the Ice Cream Social, contribute to the Austria rock exchange, start planning your fair display, or invite someone new to come see what we are all about.

Like a ruby catching the light, our society shines brightest when every member brings something of themselves to the table.

May we never stop learning.

With appreciation,

Cristian Battazar

President
San Joaquin Valley Lapidary Society

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Soaking up the sun in the Mojave Desert December 2025



Society News

**BREAKING
NEWS**

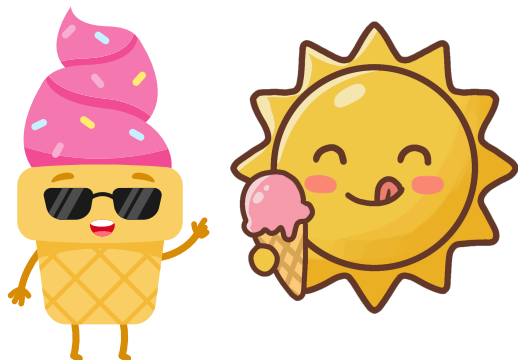
General Meeting: July

July 13th @ 6:30 pm at

East Bakersfield Veteran's Hall

2101 Ridge Road, Bakersfield, CA 93305

We will be having our Ice Cream Social
Bring a topping of your choice and come
cool off while talking rocks
Look forward to seeing you all there!



Support SJVLS and look out for updates
on our socials

Website: <https://sjvls.club>

Instagram: @sjv_lapidary

Facebook: San Joaquin Valley Lapidary Society

Submission Deadline for Slab N Gab:

The submission deadline is the 25th of every month.
This is for articles, photographs and any other
information you would like to be included.
Please submit to the Newsletter Director at
chellecoleman.mc@gmail.com

Kern County Fair

Start thinking about your display for the Kern
County Fair if you are planning on submitting one.
It's coming up quickly. Exhibit info available on
the Fair's website at kerncountyfair.com
Click on Participate, then Competitive Exhibits



Bring your contribution for the rock exchange from
California to send to our friends in Austria
to the next meeting.

We need a mixture of polished and raw finds to send out.

FIELD TRIP

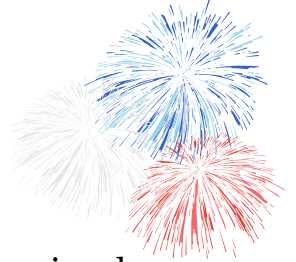
July 18th: Jamala Beach

We will leave at 7:00 am at Harbor Freight.

Bring bags rather than buckets to this
location. It can get pretty windy so be
prepared. Find on this trip is root beer
agate and much more. Bring your sunblock,
chairs, food and water and come have a
good time rockhounding at the coast with
us. Get away from that Central Valley heat.

ON THE COVER

Why the 4th of July fireworks depend on rocks and minerals



There would be no fireworks without rocks and minerals.

An aerial fireworks burst is produced by launching a fireworks shell high into the air, where an explosion occurs. This explosion propels brightly burning particles (known as "stars") in many directions. Each streak of light in the firework is a burning "star" flying through the air.

Coal and saltpeter (potassium-nitrate) are used to create gunpowder, the fuel that allows the stars in the firework to burn. Nitratine, a highly reactive mineral, is the natural form of sodium-nitrate and serves as an oxidizer for fireworks. Oxidizers are added to produce oxygen to support the fuel's combustion.

The vibrant colors in a firework don't come directly from the burning fuel, but metal minerals that are deliberately added in very small amounts to the mix. As the fuel burns, the metal atoms in the crystal structure absorb energy, become excited, and emit a specific color of light.

The element barium will produce green light. Barium is obtained chiefly from the mineral barite consisting of barium-sulfate. The baryte group also includes celestite, or strontium-sulfate, used to produced purple fireworks.



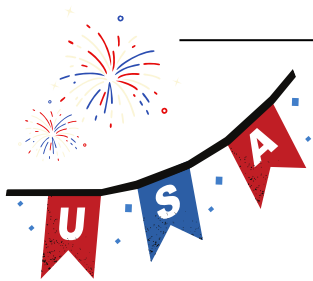
Barite crystal from Morocco



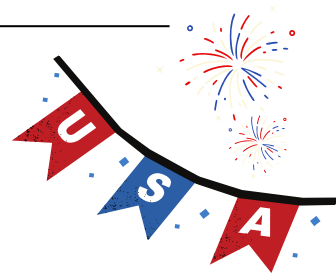
Celestite crystal

The elements strontium and lithium will produce red light. Strontium is the 15th most abundant element in the Earth's crust. Only two minerals, however - celestite and strontianite - contain strontium in sufficient quantities for commercial use, and these minerals are found predominantly in sedimentary rocks.

The element calcium will produce yellow light. Named from the Latin word meaning "lime," calcium is - unsurprisingly - very common in limestone rocks composed of calcite and dolomite.



On the Cover Continued:



The elements sodium and cadmium will produce yellow light. Most sodium is obtained nowadays by processing the mineral halite, also known as sodium-chloride or common table salt. Sodium occurs in many other minerals as well, including amphibole, zeolite and cryolite. Cadmium minerals are very rare and include cadmoselite (a cadmium-selenide), greenockite (a cadmium-sulfide) and otavite (a cadmium-carbonate). Cadmium substitutes for zinc in sphalerite (zinc-sulfide) and similar minerals, so most is recovered during the industrial processing of zinc, copper and lead ores.

Burning magnesium and aluminum will emit a bright white light. Magnesium is chiefly obtained by electrolysis of magnesium-chloride, which can be obtained in virtually unlimited quantities from the oceans or salt lakes. Magnesium is also obtained in smaller quantities from the magnesium-bearing minerals dolomite, magnesite, kieserite and brucite. Other magnesium-bearing minerals include carnallite, cordierite, and diopside. Aluminum is the most abundant metal element in the Earth's crust and can be obtained from Bauxite ore. Bauxite is a complex mix of the minerals gibbsite, boehmite, and diaspore, formed as less stable minerals like feldspar and mica react with water.



Bauxite ore w/high content of aluminum



Single Cobaltite crystal on matrix



Close up of pyrolusite rock

Purple light is also emitted from excited copper and manganese atoms. Copper is found in many minerals that occur in deposits large enough to mine. These include azurite, malachite (both copper carbonate hydroxide minerals), chalcocite (a copper-sulfide), acanthite (a copper-silver sulfide), chalcopyrite and bornite. Most copper comes from chalcopyrite, a copper-iron sulfide mineral. Manganese easily reacts with water and air. On Earth, manganese is never found as a free metal, but it is found in a number of minerals. The most important of these minerals is pyrolusite, a mineral consisting essentially of manganese-dioxide and the most important ore of manganese.

The element cobalt will produce blue light. Cobaltite is a sulfide mineral composed of cobalt, arsenic, iron, and sulfur. Although rare, it is mined as a significant source of the strategically important metal cobalt. Traces of cobalt can be found also in common nickel minerals like carrollite, a sulfide of copper and cobalt, and linnaeite, a cobalt-sulfide.

By: David Bressan,
Former Contributor Forbes Magazine
David Bressan is a geologist who covers curiosities about Earth.

THE GEM OF THE MONTH:

RUBY



Ruby is one of the most historically significant colored stones. Rubies are mentioned four times in the Bible, in association with attributes like beauty and wisdom. In the ancient language of Sanskrit, ruby is called ratnaraj, or “king of precious stones.”

In the first century AD, the Roman scholar Pliny included rubies in his Natural History, describing their hardness and density. Ancient Hindus believed that those who offered fine rubies to the god Krishna were granted rebirth as emperors.

Hindus divided ruby into four castes, calling the true Oriental ruby a Brahmin. Someone in possession of a Brahmin was believed to have the advantage of perfect safety.

Ruby has accumulated a host of legends over the centuries. People in India believed that rubies enabled their owners to live in peace with their enemies. In Burma (a ruby source since at least 600 AD—now called Myanmar), warriors possessed rubies to make them invincible in battle. However, it wasn't enough to just wear the rubies. They had to insert them into their flesh and make them part of their bodies.

The name ruby comes from the Latin word ruber, which means “red.” The glowing red of ruby suggested an inextinguishable flame burning in the stone, even shining through clothing and able to boil water.

Ruby has been called the most precious of the 12 stones created by God.

Ruby retained its importance with the birth of the western world and became one of the most sought-after gems of European royalty and the upper classes. Many medieval Europeans wore rubies to guarantee health, wealth, wisdom, and success in love.

Desire for ruby is just as great today as it always has been. As a symbol of passion, ruby makes an ideal romantic gift. Consumers are drawn to the lush color because it also signifies wealth and success.

Sixth-grader finds 85-million-year-old fossil on club field trip



Corbin Bullard didn't know exactly what he'd found while on a field trip with his 4-H Geology Club, "but I knew that it was something big."

Corbin, who was 11 at the time and in sixth grade, had stumbled across six or seven vertebrae, and they looked large. Several months and three excavation trips later, Corbin and his fellow Geology Club enthusiasts had unearthed a 15-foot-long ancient marine reptile that swam over Kansas some 85 million years ago.

Big picture view:

Corbin, of Clearwater, Kansas, is a member of the Sedgwick County 4-H Geology Club. The club plans field trips to a nearby quarry, where crews are routinely shaving off layers of rock for commercial use. With every layer removed comes another chance to find ancient relics. Before Corbin's fateful find in September 2025, he and his club members had found "boring" things like shark teeth, along with one large fish fossil whose tail was stuck too far into the ground to be excavated.

When Corbin came across the vertebrae, he knew this was different.

"I didn't know what it was, but I knew that it was something big," Corbin said in an interview with FOX Local.

Dig deeper:

After that discovery, Corbin and his crew returned to the quarry three more times to dig up more of the tylosaurus, a large marine reptile and apex predator that died roughly 85 million years ago.

Researchers who helped to date the fossil knew it came out of the Smokey Hills Chalk, which narrows it down to 82-87 million years old. It lived during the Cretaceous Era.

Corbin and the club found everything except for a piece of his tail, including his massive skull.

The tylosaurus fossil turned out to be more than 15 feet long.

What they're saying:

"It was a little bit unusual," recalled Shannon Crouch, mother of Geology Club member Zoe Crouch. "The skull was kind of flipped backward onto the back. Like the tylosaurus died with its head kind of cranked back on its backbone at an odd angle. And that was probably the most interesting thing and exciting thing once we figured out that was, he just died in a weird position. And it kind of made it challenging because we didn't know what it was we were looking at in the ground at the time, just because of the weird angle of the neck, the way it was preserved." Fossil to be shown at county fair

What's next:

Corbin, who's now 12 and heading to seventh grade, will show the head of his fossil at the Sedgwick County Fair in July. He has a hunch his exhibition will be one-of-a-kind.

Sixth-grader finds 85-million-year-old fossil on club field trip cont.

"I hope [the judges] say that it looks really nice and that we put a lot of effort into it," he said. As for where it goes after the fair, Corbin doesn't know. It was found on private property with permission from landowners, which means the ancient fossil belongs to Corbin.

Corbin said he's always been interested in geology, but now he's sure he wants to turn it into a career as a paleontologist.

Zoe Crouch, who was 9 years old at the time of the find, was there to help every step of the way.

Although she doesn't know if she'll make a career out of the club like Corbin plans to, she still thinks geology is "really cool."

"Like they're the first person to pick up an 80,000-year-old tooth or something like that," she said.

'Get your kids involved'

What you can do:

Crista Burnett, the Sedgwick County 4-H Geology Club leader, said for parents whose kids are interested in rocks, fossils or minerals, "have them reach out to their local 4-H office and have their kids get involved in the geology program."

"It is really awesome that Corbin found this tylosaurus, but he has also learned public speaking. He has learned a lot of research. There's so much good that comes out of 4-H," she said

Wendy Bullard, Corbin's mom, echoed Burnett's praise for the program.

"None of this would have happened without first of all 4-H, then the [geology] club, then the landowners and the leaders and permission to make it all happen," Bullard said. "This is not something he and I can go out together and do on our own. It's a 4-H community. So there's a lot of branches ... everything from horticulture to art, livestock, but, yeah ... it's a community and 4-H makes things like this happen."

The Source: This article includes information and comments from Corbin Bullard, Wendy Bullard, Zoe Crouch, Shannon Crouch and Crista Burnett.

By: Heather Miller

FOX Local

Lifestyle

Published June 8, 2026 10:01 AM EDT



Submitted to SJVLS by Brenda Gagnon

CMFS CORNER



July Highlights

The California Federation of Mineralogical Societies website: cfmsinc.org

We are pleased to announce that we will be offering a Zoom workshop on Competitive Exhibits in preparation for the 2026 Convention. This workshop will be designed for both first-time exhibitors and experienced competitors. Topics will include how to prepare exhibit liners, where to find the rules and judging criteria for each division, tips for creating effective displays, and a question-and-answer session to help exhibitors feel comfortable entering their work.

We hope this presentation will encourage more members to participate in one of the most educational and rewarding aspects of our hobby. Please send me an email if you would like to attend. DianeCook.cfms@gmail.com

Using "Rock holidays" to connect with your community

July: Celebrate "International Drop A Rock" day on the 3rd by painting a fun & positive message on a rock and dropping it into your neighborhood. Then celebrate "International Rock Day" on the 13th.

CFMS Annual Show & Convention

Planning continues for the 2026 CFMS Convention, which will be held September 18–20, 2026, in Reno, Nevada, in conjunction with the Reno Gem & Mineral Society's Jackpot of Gems Show. Registration forms are now available on the CFMS website and are included with this newsletter when possible. I encourage everyone to review the information and begin making plans to attend. We are looking forward to a fun and educational convention with opportunities to reconnect with old friends and make new ones.

Rock & Gem Magazine is endorsed as our hobby magazine. Pam Freeman, editor offers a 61% discount to you and AFMS gets

a 15% commission that goes to the endowment fund. Again, go to [cfsms.inc.org/forms/Rock & Gem Magazine](http://cfsms.inc.org/forms/Rock%20&%20Gem%20Magazine).

Camp Paradise is almost upon us. As of this writing the camp in general is almost full. Ann Marie and Gary and I have been overwhelmed and excited to see how fast the camp is filling up. If you have intended to fill out an application,

now is the time to do it. The deadline for registration is August 1, 2026. Camp begins on August 16, 2026. For more information go to www.CFMS.org and scroll down to Camp Paradise. Camp Paradise is also asking clubs to donate slabs, tools, findings or anything jewelry or lapidary related to the silent auction. 100% of the funds raised

will be used to offset expense of future camps.

Check out the CMFS monthly newsletter. There's more information you may want to learn about.



July Birthstones

Primary Birthstone: Ruby

The primary birthstone for July is the ruby, symbolizing love, passion, and vitality.

Ruby is the most recognized birthstone for July, celebrated for its vibrant red color and rarity. It belongs to the corundum mineral family, with its red hue derived from trace amounts of chromium.

Rubies range from deep cochineal red to lighter rose red, and the most prized shade is known as "pigeon-blood red," a bright red with a hint of purple.

Known as the "King of Gemstones," rubies have been historically associated with love, protection, wealth, and vitality.

Ancient cultures, including those in Burma, China, and India, believed rubies could protect warriors in battle, promote peace, and even grant rebirth or divine favor.

Rubies are extremely hard, second only to diamonds, making them durable for jewelry.

July also has two birth flowers: the larkspur, representing lightness of spirit and strong bonds of love, and the water lily, associated with majesty, compassion, and rebirth.

These symbols reflect the caring and loving nature of July-born individuals.

Fun Facts and Cultural Notes

July is named after Julius Caesar, who was born in this month; it was originally called Quintilis in the Roman calendar.

July is National Ice Cream Month, adding a fun summer celebration for birthday parties.

The most common birthday in July is July 7, while the least common is July 4.



July Birthdays

7/3 Jim Wood
7/7 Lunne Helfrich
7/9 Mylon Filkins

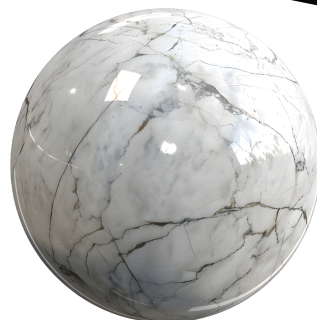
7/11 Paul Escalante
7/12 Cristian Baltazar
7/29 Richard Cornwell



Bernie's Sphere Presentation



Presentation



Top 10 World's Rarest Gems

1



Tanzanite

Found only in the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro, in Northern Tanzania, this blue-purple stone is a highly prized color-shifting gem.

2



Taaffeite

It is named for Australian gemologist Richard Taaffe, who discovered a cut and polished specimen of the stone in 1945. Only a handful of these precious stones have ever been found, making them a true collector's gem.

3



Black Opal

The rarest type of Opal, the national gemstone of Australia. Black Opal is also the most valuable gem of its kind.

4



Benitoite

Found near the San Benito River in California, Benitoite is a blue to purple gemstone first discovered in 1907. Under UV lights, it glows a brilliant chalky blue.

5



Red Beryl

Also called Scarlet Emerald or bixbite, Red Beryl has only been found in Utah and New Mexico and has been described as 1,000 times more valuable than gold.

6



Alexandrite

It is named for Tsar Alexander II of Russia and exceedingly rare gemstone. It is a color-changing gemstone, its hue shifts from red to green depending on the light it's exposed to.

7



Jadeite

Jadeite may sound like the various semi-precious stones known informally as "jade," but this incredibly rare gem is many times more valuable. Prized most when it is colored a deep, translucent green.

8



Musgravite

Another precious stone in the same family as Taaffeite, this stone's color ranges from a brilliant greenish gray to purple. Musgravite was discovered in 1967 in the Musgrave Range of Southern Australia, and for many years there were only eight known specimens.

9



Painite

In the 1950s, mineralogist Arthur C.D. Paine encountered an unusual brownish stone in Myanmar (Burma) that turned out to be one of the planet's rarest gems. For decades, only two cut specimens were known to exist, causing the jewel to be more or less "priceless."

10



Pink Star Diamond

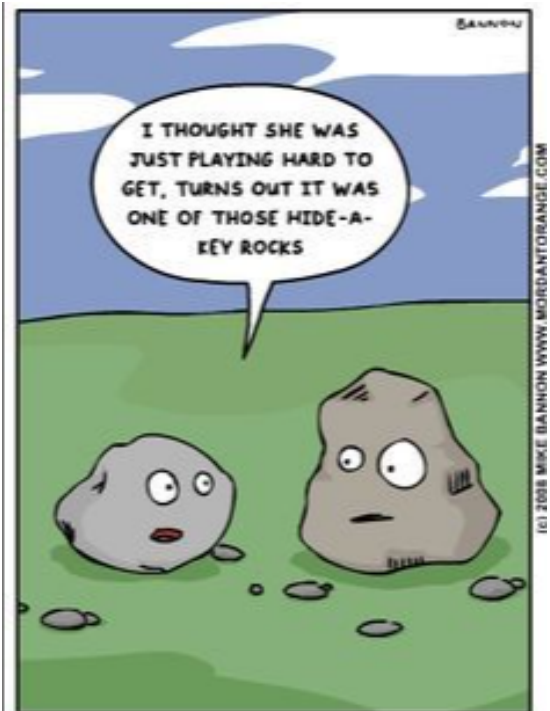
The Pink Star Diamond is a "Fancy Vivid Pink" diamond that was mined in 1999 in South Africa. Weighing in at 59.6 carats, this gem was sold by Sotheby's for a record \$83 million: more than any other diamond - or any gem - ever sold.

Rock Jokes and Puns

Gem in the Rough



A rock that doesn't go to school is a skipping stone.



Q: What kind of rocks are sour?

A: Limestone.



What do you call small rocks?

Mini-rals

The Whispering Whimsy

Pictures taken by SJVLS Members



**Pictures from the
San Simeon trip**

Submit yours to: tophercoleman@hotmail.com

Upcoming Gem and Mineral Shows

Willits Gem and Mineral Show 07/11/2026-07/12/2026: Hours: 10:00 - 6:00
Venue: The Community Center; 111 East Commercial St, The Community Center
Willits, CA

Orcutt Mineral Society's Rainbow of Gems - 7/31/26-8/2/26 at 10 am: Nipomo High School, 525
N. Thompson Ave., Nipomo, CA 93444

Roseville Gem, Jewelry, Fossil & Mineral Show - 08/1/2026-8/2/2026: Sat 10:00-5:00 Sun 10:00-
4:00

Venue: @the Grounds Roseville - Roebbelen Event Center, 700 Event Center Dr., Roseville, CA

Contra Costa Crystal Fair - 08/08/2026-8/9/2026

Venue: Civic Park Community Center, Address: 1375 Civic Drive, Civic Park Community Center
Walnut Creek, CA



SJVLS MEMBER SUBMITTED EVENTS

Hart Flat Farmer's Market

in Hart Flat off of Hart Flat Road
starting June 4th and will run every other
Thursday from 4 pm - 7 pm

No charge for vendors, so anyone can set up a table

Please note: there is no electricity or bathrooms

If interested please contact Fawn Dessy at (661)204-3011 for details and sign up information



Special Admission Days!
Family Day - First Saturday of each month
2 adults and up to 6 children are only \$20!
Senior Day - Second Saturday of each month
Admission for Seniors (60+) is only \$2!
\$2 Day - Every third Thursday. All day, all ages
admission is only \$2!

BECOME A MEMBER

- **Free admission to BVM as long as you are a member!**
- **Free admission to Bakersfield Museum of Art, Kern County Museum and CALM!**
- **Free** entry to our regular-admission priced educational programs like our "Just for Kids" events and monthly science talks.
- **Travel memberships also include free** admission to hundreds of ASTC participating museums outside your local area! (www.astc.org)
- **Discounts** on other museum events and a 10% discount in our museum store.

this membership would get you
free entry to our August
field trip to the LA Natural
History Museum and to many
other locations

July
SUMMER SCIENCE CAMPS (TBA)

- 7/1-7/4 - **FIREWORKS BOOTH**
Come and support the museum at our booth
- 7/4 - **MUSEUM CLOSED FOR HOLIDAY**
- 7/25 - **SCIENCE SATURDAY**
11AM - 2 PM. Last Saturday of each month

August - September

- 8/23- 9/4 - **KERN COUNTY FAIR**
5:30pm-6:30pm

GOLF THERAPY FORE VETERANS SPAGHETTI DINNER FUNDRAISER

SPAGHETTI DRIVE THRU DINNER!

Zingo's CAFE

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2026
TIME: 5:30 PM - 8:00 PM
HOSTED BY: ZINGO'S CAFE

DINNER INCLUDES:
SPAGHETTI, SALAD, BREADSTICKS

TICKETS: **\$20 PER PERSON**

ONLY 100 TICKETS AVAILABLE!
★ GET YOURS EARLY BEFORE THEY'RE GONE! ★

All proceeds benefit Golf Therapy Fore Veterans, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to serving military veterans through golf-based therapy, peer support, and outdoor experiences that promote healing, resilience, and community.

SCAN TO LEARN MORE ABOUT GOLF THERAPY FORE VETERANS

SUPPORT VETERANS IN OUR COMMUNITY ★ ENJOY A GREAT MEAL ★ MAKE A DIFFERENCE

www.gtfv.org | info@gtfv.org | Golf Therapy Fore Veterans

BIG FOURTH OF JULY
★ CELEBRATING AMERICA'S 250! ★
Dignity Health Amphitheater & River Walk
BAKERSFIELD, CA

JULY 3-4, 2026

- ★ FREEDOM VILLAGE ★
- ★ FOOD TRUCKS ★
- ★ KIDS ZONE ★
- ★ BOUNCY HOUSES ★
- ★ HEADLINING MUSIC ACTS ★

11200 Stockdale Hwy, Bakersfield, CA 93311

Submit your event to Michelle Coleman at chellecoleman.mc@gmail.com

2026 San Joaquin Valley Lapiary Society Board Of Directors

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