BRECCIA

Santa Clara Valley Gem and Mineral Society

Volume 73 Number 5, May 2026

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Events

May 26, 6:30 PM: Member Sale

If you have something to sell, please contact Jim Herbold.

May 26, 7:30 PM: The General Membership Meeting will feature a **Silent Auction**.

June 2, 7:30 PM: Board Meeting on Zoom. All Members are welcome to attend. If you want to attend, please contact Jim Herbold.

Annual SCVGMS Picnic

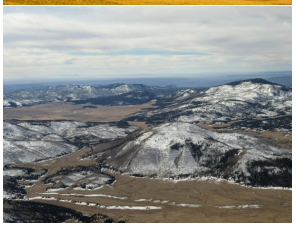
June 14, 12–3: at the Belwood Cabana Club.

June 23: The General Membership Meeting will feature member **Steve Skala**. The Bragging Rights theme is "Black Rock".

Editor's Message

Happy May! As I write this, Mothers' Day is over, Memorial Day is 2 weeks off, and my grandkids are busy studying for finals (and longing for June).

Reading the article on Rockhound State Park, led me to spend a couple of hours looking at old photos of New Mexico, where I grew up. There is so much interesting geology there.



*Here are photos of the **Valle Grande**, and an overview of the **Valles Caldera** that it is part of. The caldera is 13.7 miles in diameter.*

The Valles Caldera collapsed (1.25 million years ago) over the older Toledo Caldera (1.61 million years ago). An active geothermal system with hot springs and fumaroles still exists.

The caldera and other associated volcanic structures are at the intersection of the Rio Grande Rift, which runs north–south through New Mexico, and the Jemez Lineament, which extends from southeastern Arizona northeast to western Oklahoma. See wikipedia.org/wiki/Valles_Caldera for more information.

An area, locally known as "Obsidian Ridge", on the edge of the Valle Grande, is a great place to find obsidian.

Do you have anything that other members might enjoy?

Deb Runyan, Breccia Editor

editor@scvgms.org, 408-628-7789

Sunshine

There is nothing for Sunshine this month.

If you know of anyone needing some sunshine in their lives, please email **Margo Mosher at** margomosher@yahoo.com.

Field Trips

Note: Driving times are from Campbell and are approximate.

May 9 (Saturday): Clear Creek Management Area, Paicines CA, 3-hours

Materials: Jadeite, Plasma Agate, Petrified Wood, Serpentine, Druzy Quartz, Cinnabar, Spessartite Garnet

May 31 (Sunday): Pleiades Fluorite Mine, Austin NV, 8-hours

Pay to Play Fluorite mine. $200 per bucket of fluorite.

June 7 (Sunday): Rainbow Ridge, Virgin Valley NV, 10-hours

Pay to Play Opal, $900 for up to 3 adults.

For questions about field trips

Contact: Stephen May, Stephenmay0990@gmail.com

Phone: 669-248-3993 or 408-306-6782

3-Minute Trilliant, Cut of the Month

By Bill Brisebois

Have you ever had a shallow piece of rough in your drawer for years and never thought it would be worth the time to cut? Or have you ever needed to cut a stone in a pinch--really quickly—or had a request for something needed yesterday? Well, hopefully this design will help you.

This design was created for very shallow rough with almost any refractive index—from opal to cubic zirconia—without making changes to the angles. It really packs a punch for the few facets (only 37 including the table). It looks like there is a lot more involved in the cutting than there is.

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The cutting and polishing process on this requires a brief explanation. For small stones like a Kornerupine (not shown), which is under 1/2 carat, or the 1-carat Spinel shown here, it was a two-step process:

1. Cut with a worn 1200 lap

2. Final polished with 100k diamond on a Diamax lap

For larger stones, use whatever works best for you.

This is a great design for matching sets and pairs, such as earrings.

I used this design recently for a red spinel; although, I changed it slightly for an 84 index gear already on the machine at the time. The spinel was so very shallow, but it worked out perfectly. It retained a great yield and produced a fiery gemstone.

I hope this design will bring you some happiness in being able to utilize some "dead rough" you have laying around, as well as a sense of accomplishment for being able to turn stones very quickly. Happy cutting.

3 Minute Trilliant

Bill Brisebois - October 2024

The name is how long it took to come up with this simple, but effective cut for shallow material.

The CAD design for 3-Minute Trilliant is downloadable at: www.sdmg.org/pdf/Brisebois-3-Minute-Trilliant.pdf.

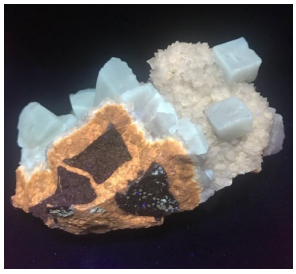
From: The Pegmatite, September 2025, San Diego Mineral & Gem Society

President's Message for May 2026

Hello, rockhounds! I hope that you are enjoying our lengthened rainy season like I am, and that you have recently had a chance to enjoy your mineral-related hobbies. I was supposed to go on a collecting trip this past weekend but I had to back out at the last minute. As a result I don't have any fresh rock pictures on my phone that I can use in this message. I'll have to go back in the archives to find a few fun pictures.

*Here's a fan favorite—**coprolite!** It a piece of fossilized dinosaur poop that I found in the 1990's when I lived in Colorado. Found near Hanksville, UT, if I remember correctly.*

Deb Runyan always does a great job keeping everyone informed about what happens at our board meetings and overall. I have two highlights that I pulled from the minutes of our last meeting. First, we had over 10 new members join us and I'm pretty sure many of them came to our Annual Show and realized that we could be a fun club to join. Second, we had 2250 attendees at our Annual Show. This is about 25% less than the prior year which may be due to high gas prices and inflation. However, most dealers were overall happy with their show revenues. Everything else is smooth sailing with Club management.



Here's another Utah piece. It's a calcite trio from a septarian nodule. This piece is illuminated under longwave UV light, which very clearly shows the three generations of calcite.

Be sure to check out the rock hunting trips listed elsewhere in this issue of the Breccia. And be sure to save the date of Sunday, June 14, 2026 for our Annual Founder's Day Picnic.

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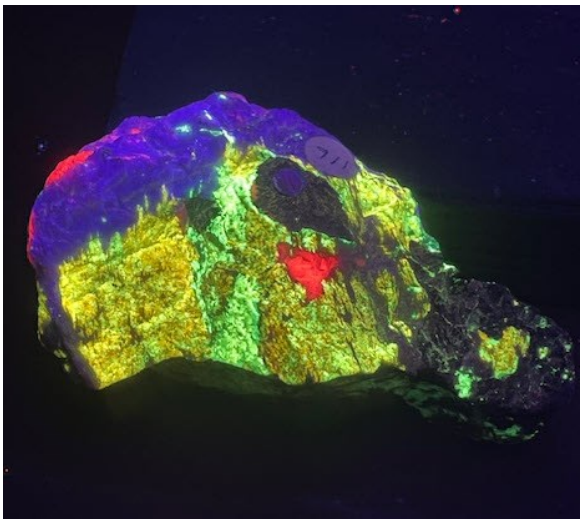


I've shown mimetoliths (rocks that bear a resemblance to the face of a person or animal) previously in my Breccia messages. ***This one is a piece of Esperite (yellow), Hardystonite (blue), Willemite (green), and Calcite (red) from Franklin, NJ.*** *It is illuminated under shortwave UV. There's also a crystal in the middle and larger section to the right of black non-fluorescing franklinite. To me, this looks like a duck head, with the black spot being the eye and the black section to the right being the bill.*

That's it for now, and I hope to see you all at the next general meeting!

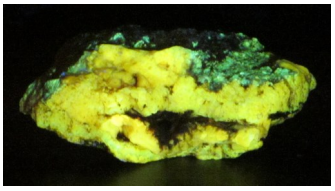
Enjoy!

Jim Herbold

SCVGMS President

Lemon Opal, Manhattan Mine, Knoxville, California

By Jim Fox



Lemon opal, also known as semi-opal, is from the Manhattan Mine in Knoxville, Napa County, CA. Under long wave UV, the lemon opal shows a bright yellow fluorescent response. The fluorescence is similar under short wave UV, but not as bright.

This specimen weighs 2.5 lbs., and measures 6.75" x 4.5" x 2.75". The Manhattan Mine, also known as the McLaughlin Mine, is located on a hot spring type deposit that produced lead, gold, silver and mercury, beginning in the 1860s. This site is no longer available for collecting.

Bragging Rights

April's Bragging Rights Theme was **"Opal"**.

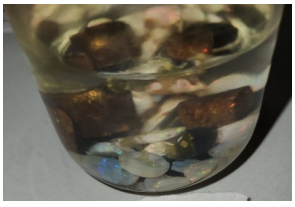
1: Welo Opal set from Ethiopia - **Cynthia Porter**

2: Ethiopian Opal necklace - **Deb Runyan**

3: Hydrophane Opal - **Joan Schramm**

4: Lemon Opal - **Jim Fox**

5: Rainbow Ridge Opalized wood - **Stephen May**



6: "Dad's Opals" in a jar - **John Sutter**

7: Kayocera Opal - **Neil Delfino**

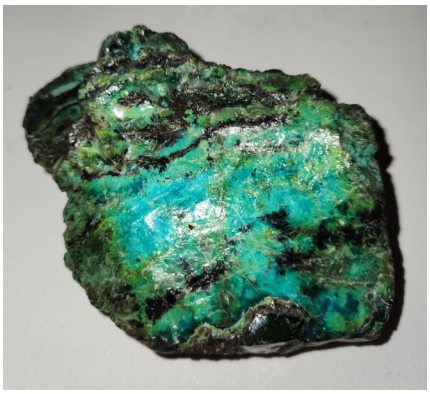
The winner is **Jim Fox's Lemon Opal** (see Page 6 for more information on Lemon Opal).

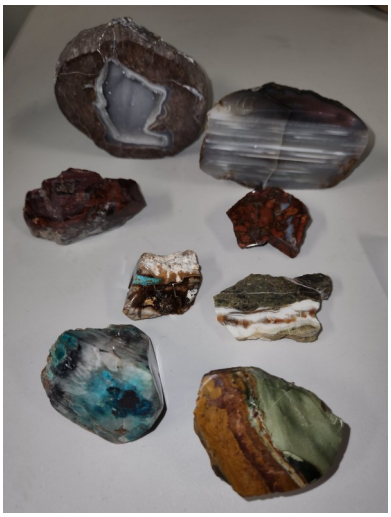
The program for the May General Meeting will be a Silent Auction, so there will be no Bragging Rights.

June's Bragging Rights theme is **"Black Rock"**.

Member Displays

Joan Schramm brought Chrysocolla from Bisby Arizona, Carnelian, and Jasper.





Stephen May brought a selection of rocks from field trips.

You may bring any type of rock, mineral, or fossil (identified or not), your latest project, information on a field trip, or anything to do with rocks. Sharing items helps to educate all who are attending. Show off what you love, so that we can enjoy it with you.

Observations

We are all visitors to this place. We are just passing through. Our purpose here is to observe, to learn, to grow, to love...and then we return home.

Australian Aboriginal Proverb

It isn't the mountain ahead that wears you out, it's the grain of sand in your shoe.

Smile and Silence are two powerful tools. Smile is the way to solve many problems. Silence is the way to avoid many problems.

Website Links

Your Window to the World of Important Websites

SCVGMS Website: https://www.scvgms.org/

SCVGMS Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/santaclaravalleygemandmineralsociety

American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS): https://www.amfed.org

American Lands Access Association (ALAA): www.amlands.org

BLM Rockhounding: https://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/rockhounding

California Federation of Mineralogical Societies (CFMS): https://cfmsinc.org/

"CO-OP"—The Cooperative Field Trip Chairmen Association's Website: https://www.co-opfieldtrips.com/field-trips

GemKids: https://gemkids.gia.edu/

Mindat.org (world's largest open database of minerals, rocks, meteorites): https://www.mindat.org/

Smithsonian Science How Webcast Archives: https://naturalhistory.si.edu/education/school-programs/grades-3-5/smithsonian-science-how/smithsonian-science-how-webcast-archives

Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History: https://www.youtube.com/@nationalmuseumofnaturalhistory

Beyond 4Cs 23 Amazing Sites For Free Gemology Courses & Resources: beyond4cs.com/free-gemology-courses-and-resources/

Common Minerals & Their Uses: https://mineralseducationcoalition.org

Official State Fossils: https://netstate.com/states/tables/state_fossils.htm

Ultimate Beginners Guide to Rock Tumbling: rocktumbling.co/beginners-guide

American Geode: http://www.americangeode.com/

The American Opal Society: http://opalsociety.org

Rock Tumbler Library: https://rocktumbler.com/questions.shtml

Rockhound State Park, NM

Rockhounding in New Mexico

Text by Larry Lightner

I had been hearing about Rockhound State Park, about nine miles southeast of Deming, New Mexico, for nearly nine years, but I never seemed to get the opportunity to go down and see it in person.

My wife, Jeri, and I both love to look for unusual rocks and stones. We have specimens all over the place at our home, inside and out.

On a warm, sunny day a short while ago, we decided to take a trip down to the park, which is situated on the western flank of the Little Florida Mountains, and explore the area and its surroundings.

As soon as we arrived, we checked out the park exhibit room to see just what the heck we were supposed to be looking for. The raw product always looks very different from the finished one, and it helps to see the rocks on display.

We inspected a plaque outside which had specimens of semi-precious gem stones. That really got us going. We discovered this area has opals, jasper, geodes and a glittery black gemstone.

We don’t have any real rock gathering equipment, so I make do with what I have. A twenty-ounce claw hammer will crack rocks and suffices as a pick. We also carried a plastic jug for rocks. I cut a four-inch hole on top, opposite the handle, to make it into a container for specimens. We wore fanny packs, and I

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carried a camera and binoculars, the former to take photos of my attractive wife, and the latter to view the surrounding tall peaks in hopes of seeing an Ibex, that illusive goat that has been transplanted to the park region.

Off we trudged, taking the first small trail to our right. It led us up and over a saddle, out of sight of the park proper. We slowly explored around a myriad of prickly pear cactus searching for something unusual. We immediately found the glittery black gemstones.

Onward and upward we traveled, our destination an outcropping of dark boulders. It was here that we discovered large amounts of jasper, most of which appeared to be orange and orange-brown. We also gathered some pink jasper and some of a gold coloration.

There were copious amounts of the black gemstone, which I was especially drawn to, much to Jeri's puzzlement since she did not find them to be particularly appealing.

We soon found out that our hammer was inadequate for the task at hand. When we tried to break particularly large rocks, the head would bounce off, sending splinters of steel and rock flying dangerously, like missiles, in every direction. We quickly discovered that the steel hammer head was taking quite a beating. It was tempered for hitting steel nail heads, not striking rocks. Evidently, the rocks are harder than steel. My glasses fell victim to the rock fragments and became chipped. We decided to turn our heads and swing blindly so as not to incur any more personal damage or expose our eyes to flying chips of stone and steel.

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We really did not know what in the heck we were doing, but the object was to have fun, and we had lots of that. So we mostly settled on collecting the odd or the pretty.

Within ninety minutes or so, we had a handful of rock specimens, so we opted to go back down and have a picnic. Instead of utilizing one of the many clean picnic tables, we decided to sit on the tailgate where we could eat, look about and chat casually. We dined on Jeri's homemade potato salad, raw vegetables and thick corned beef sandwiches while we planned our next trek.

About five hundred feet above us, on a steep slope, we spied two outcroppings of whitish-brown veins that were quite conspicuous since nothing else was that color. They drew me like a magnet.

We had to do some scrambling to reach the veins. It was steep and loose to boot, but accessible as long as we used caution. There were many places where others before us had dug at the bases of boulders and outcroppings. It was in one of these places that we took some greenish-tan specimens using the claws of the hammer as a pick. I had no idea what this stuff was, but it was unique to the countryside, so we collected it.

We climbed higher, my wife in the lead. She seemed to really be having fun crawling up and down the slopes, using the hammer claws to secure hand holds and for breaking up the small stones that caught her eye.

Nodules

At one place we found a small outcropping of geodes. We did not find any with crystalline hollows to keep, but we did find a bunch of small, marble-like nodules. Some were striped, but most were all solid slate gray. They seemed unusual to us, so we gathered a few of the prettier ones and put them in our jug.

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Next, we moved into a steep draw which had a vein of tan limestone. Right in the middle of it, on a wall about twelve feet up, was an unusual vein of bright pink limestone, at least that is what my tongue told me it was after I tasted it. Jeri insisted on getting some, so she literally crawled and pulled herself up the nearly vertical slope. I followed after her, figuring that I would do the husbandly thing and break her fall if she slipped and needed a soft place to land. But she got up there, as did I, without mishap. She proceeded to use the hammer claws to break away small chunks of her "treasure". It was a good spot to sit and admire the great view of the park grounds far below us.

Near this spot I found some more black rocks that were grainy in structure and did not have the glitter of my others. They reminded me of anthracite coal. I gathered a couple small pieces.

In our explorations, we did not find any opals. I guess that is because we would not have known a raw opal if it had broken loose and hit us on the head. It was our only minor disappointment since this gem is Jeri's favorite.

On the way down, I stepped on a loose rock about the size of my fist. It let loose, causing me to take a nosedive down hill. Nothing got hurt except my dignity. I imagined that all the visitors in the park were at that very instant looking upward, viewing my fall.

We left the park with a few specimens and souvenirs, which is the limit that one is allowed to take, and drove east. I had heard that there was a little known road over the saddle which would take us out to the roads east of the mountains. The graded road soon turned into an ungraded two track which then in turn, turned into a wash with a few vehicle tracks in it. Then it turned into a bare whisper of a trail, then finally back into a rocky wash. I quit here as a tall cut bank lay before my front wheels. No one had been this way in a long time, and we were

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four or five miles from the graded road. Not a good place to get stuck. I reluctantly turned back, to the relief of my spouse. (She does not like four wheeling!!)

All in all, it was a good trip and a great adventure. We plan to do it again. Who knows, maybe we will even be able to find an opal or two.

Before you go … visit the Rockhound State Park website. The park allows rockhounding. They limit the amount of rocks and specimens to a handful per individual. It is not noted on their website, but if you check in at the Visitor's Center or call, you can get more details about rockhounding in the park.

Thanks to DesertUSA for permission to republish this article. https://www.desertusa.com/dusablog/rockhound-state-park-nm/

Smiles

So, now cocaine is only a misdemeanor in Oregon, but plastic straws are illegal. That must be frustrating.

Still trying to get my head around the fact that 'Take Out' can mean food, dating, or murder.

Dear paranoid people, who check behind their shower curtains for murderers. If you do find one, what's your plan?

Information on Shows 2026

June 27-28, 2026 – Culver City, CA

Culver City Rock & Mineral Society

Veterans Memorial Auditorium

4117 Overland Ave.

Hours: Sat 10–6, Sun 10–5

Contact: culvercityrocks35@gmail.com

Web: culvercityrocks.org/.fiesta/

July 31-August 2, 2026 – Nipomo, CA

Orcutt Mineral Society

Nipomo High School

525 N. Thompson Rd.

Hours: Fri & Sat 10–5, Sun 10–4

Contact: nipomocowgirl55@yahoo.com,

(805) 929-2783

Web: https://oms-inc.org

August 22-23 – Escondido, CA

Palomar Gem & Mineral Club

California Center for the Arts, The Museum

340 N. Escondido Blvd.

Hours: Sat 10–5, Sun 10–4

Contact: pgmcshow@gmail.com

Web: palomargem.org

September 18-20 – Reno, NV

Reno Gem & Mineral Society

CFMS Annual Show & Convention

Reno Convention Center

Hours: Fri & Sat 9–5, Sun 9–4

Contact: showdirector@renogemandmineralsociety.org

Web: renogms.org

September 19-20 – Monterey, CA

Carmel Valley Gem & Mineral Society

Monterey Fairgrounds

2004 Fairgrounds Rd.

Hours: Sat & Sun 10–5

Web: cvgms.rocks

September 19-20, 2026 – Chico, CA

Feather River Lapidary & Mineral Society

Silver Dollar Fairground

2357 Fair St.

Hours: Sat 9–5, Sun 9–4

Contact: shows@featherriverrocks.org

Web: featherriverrocks.org/show-2

Why are rubies red and emeralds green? Their colors come from the same metal in their atomic structure

Published: February 4, 2025 8:42am EST

Rubies get their bright color from some fascinating chemistry.

Matthew Hill/Bloomberg Creative Photos via Getty Images

by Daniel Freedman University of Wisconsin-Stout

I am an inorganic chemist. Researchers in my field work to understand the chemistry of all the elements that make up the periodic table. Many inorganic chemists focus on the transition metals—the elements in the middle of the periodic table. The transition metals include most of the metals you are familiar with, like iron (Fe) and gold (Au).

The colors of rubies and emeralds are so striking that they define shades of red and green—ruby red and emerald green. But have you ever wondered how they get those colors?

One feature of compounds made with transition metals is their intense color. There are many examples in nature, including gemstones and paint pigments. Even the color of blood comes from the protein hemoglobin, which contains iron.

Investigating the colors of compounds containing transition metals leads you into some really amazing science—that's part of what drew me to study this field.

Rubies and emeralds are great examples of how a small amount of a transition metal—in this case, chromium—can create a beautiful color in what would otherwise be a fairly boring-looking mineral.

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Minerals and crystals

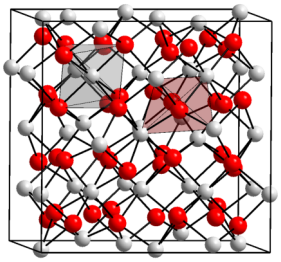
Rubies appear red because they absorb blue and green light. benedek/E+ via Getty Images

Both rubies and emeralds are minerals, which is a type of rock with a consistent chemical composition and a highly ordered structure at the atomic level.

When this highly ordered structure extends in all three dimensions, the mineral becomes a crystal.

With a theory developed by physicists in the 1920s called crystal field theory, scientists can explain why rubies and emeralds have the colors they do. Crystal field theory makes predictions about how a transition metal ion's structure is affected by the other atoms surrounding it.

Rubies are mainly made up of the mineral corundum, which is composed of the elements aluminum and oxygen in a regular, repeating array. Each aluminum ion is surrounded by six oxygen ions.



A crystal of corundum looks like this at the atomic level, with the aluminum ions shown as red balls and the oxygen ions shown as white balls. Each aluminum ion is surrounded by six oxygen ions, and each oxygen by four aluminums. Eigenes Werk/Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA

Emeralds are mainly made up of the mineral beryl, which is made from the elements beryllium, aluminum, silicon and oxygen. Beryl's crystal structure is more complicated than corundum's because of the additional elements in the formula, but each aluminum ion is again surrounded by six oxygen ions.

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Emeralds appear green because they absorb red and blue light.
SunChan/E+ via Getty Images

Pure corundum and beryl are colorless. The brilliant colors of rubies and emeralds come from the presence of very small amounts of chromium. The chromium replaces about 1% of the aluminum in the corundum or beryl crystal when a ruby or emerald forms underground at a high temperature and pressure.

But how can one element—chromium—create the red color of a ruby and green color of an emerald?

Color science

Rubies and emeralds have the colors they do because, like many substances, they absorb some colors of light. Most visible light, like sunlight, is composed of all the colors of the rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. These colors make up the visible light spectrum, which is easy to remember as ROY G BIV.

One of the main reasons why objects have a color is because they absorb one or more of these visible colors of light. If a substance absorbs, for instance, red light, it means that the red light gets trapped in the substance and the other colors reflect back to your eyes. The color you see is the sum of the remaining light, which will be in the green-to-blue range. If a substance absorbs blue, it will look red or orange to you.

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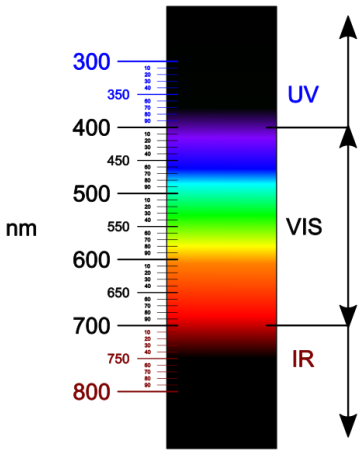

Objects absorb some visible light wavelengths and reflect others, which is why we see them as having a color.

Fulvio314/Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA

Unlike the colorless aluminum ion, the chromium ion absorbs blue and green light when surrounded by the oxygen ions. The red light is reflected back, so that's what you see in rubies.

In an emerald, even though the chromium is surrounded by six oxygen ions, there is a weaker interaction between the chromium and the surrounding oxygen ions. That's due to the presence of silicon and beryllium in the beryl crystal. They cause the emerald to absorb blue and red light, leaving the green for you to see.

The ability to tune the properties of transition metals like chromium through changing what is surrounding it is a core strategy in my field of inorganic chemistry. Doing so can help scientists understand the basic science of metal-containing compounds and the design of chemical compounds for specific purposes.

You can take delight in the amazing colors of the gemstones, but through chemistry, you can also see how nature creates those colors using an endless variety of complex structures made with the elements in the periodic table.

Daniel Freedman, Dean of the College of Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics & Management, University of Wisconsin-Stout

Gemstone Color Chart

Posted to r/Gemstone_lovers by coadilo.

Suggested by **Sonia Dyer.**

From: https://www.reddit.com/r/Gemstone_lovers/comments/1stwkeq/gemstone_color_chart/

SCVGMS ELECTED OFFICERS

President: Jim Herbold, 650-743-3254

Vice President: Stephen May, 408-306-6782

Secretary: Cynthia Porter, 408-978-5848

Treasurer: Frank Mullaney, 408-691-2656

Board Members at Large

Jim Fox, 408-356-7711

Missy Fox, 408-356-7711

Paul Kidman, 408-356-4995 (Alternate Federation Director)

Cathy May, 408-248-3993

Deb Runyan, 408-628-7789

Michele Smith, 408-374-1897

SCVGMS COMMITTEE HEADS

Bragging Rights Chair: Cesar Nuñez

Breccia Editor: Deb Runyan

Donation Receiving Committee Chair: Michele Smith

Fairgrounds Booth Chair: Michele Smith

Fairgrounds Liaison: Frank Mullaney

Fairgrounds Volunteer Coordinator: Margo Mosher

Field Trip Coordinator: Stephen May

Founder's Day Bingo: Sonia Dyer

Founder's Day Picnic Chair: Jim Herbold

Founder's Day Raffle: TBD

Hospitality: Margo Mosher

Installation Dinner: TBD

Member Displays: TBD

Refreshments: TBD

Show Chair: Margo Mosher

Silent Auction: TBD

Sunshine: Margo Mosher

Trophies: Frank Mullaney

Santa Clara Valley Gem and Mineral Society

P.O. Box 54, San Jose, CA 95103-0054

Website: www.scvgms.org

Email: inbox@scvgms.org

Phone Number 408-265-1422

Like us on Facebook:

https://www.facebook.com/santaclaravalleygemandmineralsociety

An Invitation

This society is pleased to invite guests to attend general meetings, study groups, and field trips. **General meetings are held the fourth Tuesday of every month with meet and greet time beginning at 7:00 followed by the meeting at 7:30 PM at 100 Belwood Gateway (the Cabana Club), Los Gatos, CA 95032.** Belwood Gateway is just south of Blossom Hill Road between Leigh Avenue and Harwood Road.

Our Society's Purpose: The inculcation of a love of rocks and minerals by the furtherance of members' interests in the earth sciences and by education in all facets of related educational activities with the promotion of good fellowship, proper ethics, and conduct.

Our Membership Requirements: Attendance at two general meetings within twelve months.

This society is a member of the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies (CFMS) and is affiliated with the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS).

Our Newsletter, the Breccia, is published 11 times annually. The deadline for all articles is the Sunday after each general meeting. The Breccia editor is **Deb Runyan** who may be contacted by email at editor@scvgms.org and by phone at 408-628-7789. The Breccia is proofread by **Pat Speece** and **Sonia Dyer**.

Exchange bulletins may be emailed to editor@scvgms.org. Permission to copy is freely granted to American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS) affiliated clubs when proper credit is given.