



BRECCIA

Santa Clara Valley Gem and
Mineral Society

Volume 73 Number 8, August 2026

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Events

August 25, 6:30 PM: Member Sale

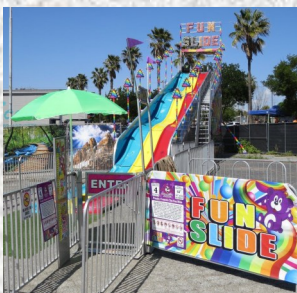
If you have something to sell, just bring it, and small bills for making change.

August 25, 7:30 PM: The General Membership Meeting will feature **Stephen May** with reviews of field trips. The Bragging Rights theme is "Orbicular Jasper" (like Morgan Hill Jasper).

September 22: The General Membership Meeting will feature **Jim Herbold**.

October 6, 7:30 PM: Board Meeting on Zoom. All Members are welcome to attend. If you want to attend, please contact [Jim Herbold](#).

October 27, 7:30 PM: The General Membership Meeting will feature a DRC Sale.



Things to do at the
County Fair after
you volunteer.



Editor's Message

Happy summer! I just survived another hot day (for Campbell). Thank goodness that the evenings and nights have been cool, so I can get the house temperature into the upper 60's by morning.

Thanks to Jo Boroucki for her "[Fulgurites](#)", and to John Hawk for "[FIRE](#)". They saved me from having to come up with something to write about.

"[Bragging Rights](#)" in July had the largest group of entries I have ever seen. Too bad we don't have second, or even third places; there were several really impressive specimens.

Please contribute up to 2 or 3 pages of whatever you think others would find interesting. Rock related photos are also appreciated. The deadline for submissions is the Sunday after each General Meeting.

Do you have anything that other members might enjoy?

Deb Runyan, Breccia Editor

editor@scvgms.org, 408-628-7789

New Members

We welcome new members to
SCVG&MS!

Hunter Wodzinski and Allison Kahu

Welcome!

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.



Letter to the Editor

I go to our monthly meetings and enjoy mingling with people, seeing what they have brought, and having a treat. You probably enjoy those things, too.

However, I cannot understand what is being said by any of the speakers. They are usually loud enough, but rarely clear enough.

Loudness does not equal clarity. People with hearing aids need the clarity.

There is an easy solution: use the microphone. It changes garbled sounds to understandable English. Those wearing hearing aids will thank you. They might even volunteer!

Thanks!

Pat Speece

Membership Dues for 2026 Are Due

SCVGMS membership dues are due for the year 2026. Your dues are essential to the operation of SCVGMS.

Dues are \$5.00 for Junior, \$20.00 for an individual, and \$30.00 for the household.

You can now easily pay online, at <https://www.scvgms.org/product/membership-dues/>

Or

Pay Frank at a meeting

Or

Send your check to Treasurer, Santa Clara Valley Gem and Mineral Society, Box 54, San Jose, CA 95103-0054, or to: Frank Mullaney, 5705 Begonia Drive, San Jose, CA 95124

Thank you.

Field Trips

Note: Driving times are from Campbell and are approximate.

September 26–27 (Saturday–Sunday): Field Trip to Mina, NV, ~8-hours
Hawthorne, Mina region in Nevada

Materials: Microcline Feldspar, Copper minerals, Black Quartz Crystals, Epidote, Epidote in Quartz, Epidote in Calcite, Grandradite and Grossular Garnet. Fossils, and possible Petrified Wood. The roads in Nevada have been thrashed in the last few years. The actual sites and available material will depend upon access issues determined just before the trip.

Sponsors: Co-Op Field Trip, CFMS, and Roseville Rock Rollers Gem and Mineral Society

For questions about field trips

Contact: Stephen May, Stephenmay0990@gmail.com

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

Volunteers Needed for the 2026 County Fair

August 20–23

The County Fair is very important for our club. Not only do we get free advertising, and the volunteers get free admission to the Fair, but it also helps with what we pay when we hold our own show in the Spring.

Frank Mullaney, rockyfiv@gmail.com, needs a few more volunteers to help with setting up, taking down, and working the Fair. Please email him with the days you are available, and enjoy the Fair for free!



Did you know ...

The “sixth sick sheik’s sixth sheep’s sick” is said to be the toughest tongue twister in the English language.

President’s Message

Hello, everyone! I hope that your summer is treating you well, and that you got to enjoy your mineral-related hobbies recently.

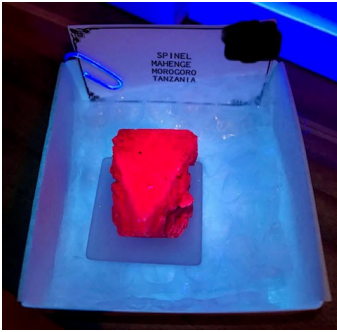
So, I got to visit the Culver City mineral show earlier this summer. They had probably 20 vendors and I was impressed with how things were set up and run. There were a few vendors that I know, and I now know that they sell on a broader circuit than just northern California. Attendance was great while I was there, and it looked like plenty of rocks were heading out the door. True to my word, I was super-discriminating relative to my own purchasing. I ended up not buying anything, which I think is a first for me at a mineral show.

There was one vendor that had a few pieces that I was very drawn to, but his prices were simply too high. I know that we all get excited to buy a rock when we know for sure that it is underpriced. And personally I do not mind paying if I know a price is close enough to retail-appropriate, provided that I love the specimen. Honestly, I want mineral dealers to do well, so I’m not going to a show trying to negotiate every dealer down to zero margin. But on the other end of the spectrum, I’m never going to overpay for a specimen if I really know what the retail price should be based on experience and prior purchases. This was the case with the pieces that I found in Culver City that I really liked.

One piece was an impressive crystal cluster of rubies that were pseudomorphed from spinel. I loved the aesthetics and the vibrant red under longwave UV, but I was questioning if it is not just spinel—they look quite similar when fluorescing. There were no other visual clues that it was definitely ruby and not spinel. Even if it was a pseudo, the small size of the piece did not justify the price.

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On the left, is a spinel crystal with a vibrant red fluorescence...



And on the right, a piece of stacked ruby crystal from India. The fluorescent red color is slightly different due to different photo conditions, but quite similar to spinel when you see them side-by-side.

The other piece I really liked was a specimen of plumbogummite after pyromorphite. I've included pictures of this material in prior Breccia write-ups. They have a ridiculously cool green and yellow glow under midwave UV, and they are increasingly hard to find. The dealer was asking too much for a single medium-sized crystal, so walking away was pretty easy. They came out of China from 2013 to 2015 and no newer material has hit the market since then. I'm sure this is why the prices are going up, so maybe the pieces in my collection are getting more valuable...



One of my favorites - plumbogummite after pyromorphite

That's it for now, enjoy!

Jim Herbold

SCVGMS President

Smile 1

Rockhounds love music, but their playlists get boring
They're only rock and roll.

Fulgurites

by Jo Borucki, May 21, 2026



I am holding lightning in my hand. It seems as though that would be rather dangerous to say the least. After all, lightning can spark a forest fire, kill a person if it strikes them, or crack a chimney if it uses the chimney as its path to the ground. We've all heard news reports of lightning induced forest fires.

My mother told me that a neighbor of hers was killed by a lightning bolt when he was struck by one. Down the street from the house where I lived as a child, a lightning bolt cracked the chimney on a neighbor's home.

I certainly would not want to hold lightning in my hand. But, the lightning that I hold, is fossilized. I am holding a fulgurite in my hand.

Fulgurites are sometimes called fossilized lightning and are made when lightning discharges into the ground, melting and fusing the silica rich soil to form a tube, crust, or clumped mass of melted soil.

I grew up in a sandy area near the Wisconsin River where storms with thunder and lightning were common occurrences,

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but I never found a fulgurite in all of the years that I lived there. Instead, I found one about twenty years ago when I was walking in the Colorado Desert in California near the town of Brawley. My son-in-law, Ed, told me that what I found was a fulgurite, and delightedly, I took it home with me, where it has had a place in my rock garden ever since. Lightning is an infrequent event in this area, and I feel fortunate to have found this fulgurite.

Vitrification is a transformation of a substance into glass usually by heating or cooling it rapidly. The glass is amorphous, meaning that it does not have a crystallized structure. Fulgurites are a vitrification, in this case, of sand, into an amorphous, silica glass. This transformation of sand to glass was achieved when the lightning's heat passed through the sand, heating it enough to form my fulgurite.

Most fulgurites are on a spectrum of white to black, but the sand in the Colorado Desert is a reddish yellow, as is my fulgurite.

Finding the fulgurite was definitely frosting on the cake for me. About twenty years ago, my daughter, Monica, and son-in-law, Ed, invited me to go with them and their two daughters, Sydney and Madeline, to visit his parents. Their house was small, with only three bedrooms, so, I slept with Madeline, and so not only did I find fulgurite, but got to sleep with a Mexican Jumping Bean. After all, I was near the border between the US and Mexico, and my energetic bean was Madeline. She kept rolling out of the small bed. It was as though she bounced because she levitated immediately back into bed. I didn't get much sleep, but I was entertained by my favorite Mexican Jumping Bean named Madeline near the border between the US and Mexico. What could be better than that!

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So, back to fulgurites! According to Wikipedia, fulgurites fall into five classes. They are:

- Type 1 – sand fulgurites with a tubular structure.
- Type 2 – Soil fulgurites which are glass-rich and may be composed of many different soils from clay, gravel, or loessoid soils which, as far as I can figure out from obtuse definitions, are collapsible soils whose composition depends on where they are and when they were formed.
- Type 3 – (calcic) are basically calcium-rich and gel-like.
- Type 4 – (rock fulgurites) are crusts on minimally altered rocks.
- Type 5 – (droplet) fulgurites show evidence of having been ejected, (perhaps) from a volcano.
- Phytifulgurite – alteration of a biomass such as grass, wood, lichens, or moss when struck by cloud to ground lightning. Unlike the other five types, these are not varieties of glass.

Figuring out all of this from a lot of confusing information and writing it down has left me exhausted and wondering if I got it right at all. If Madeline were 5 years old again, I think that, if I had to sleep with her, she could jump around to her heart's content, and I would sleep like a log, unless of course, my logself was struck by lightning and I became a Phytifulgurite.

The End

Smile 2

You Know that You Are a Rockhound if...

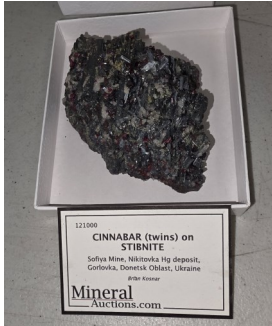
You have found yourself trying to explain to airport security that a rock hammer really is not a weapon.

Bragging Rights

July's Bragging Rights Theme was "Red Rock".

The winner is **Neil Delfino's** Ruby in Marble.

August's Bragging Rights theme is "Orbicular Jasper".



1: Cinnabar on Stibnite, Ukraine - Jody Reichel



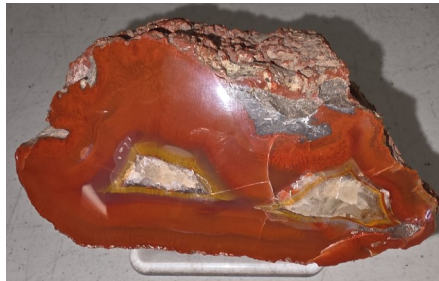
2: Rhodonite raw crystal, Brazil - Maddie Quaranton



3: ET from Area 54 Jasper and Quartz - Neil Delfino



4: Ruby in Marble and close up of the Ruby - Neil Delfino



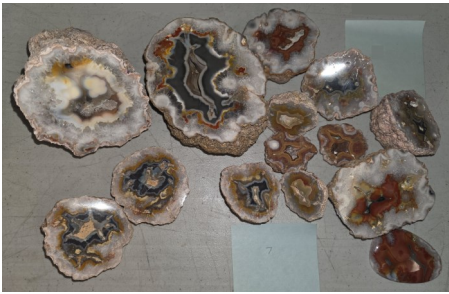
5: Petrified Redwood Cosco/Yellow Cat - Missy Fox



6: Black Opals and Mexican Opal - Stephan May

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7: Puma Agate, Argentina
- Antonio Nguyen



8: Pietersite, China -
Antonio Nguyen



9: Felspar, Black
Tourmaline &
Garnet, China -
Antonio Nguyen



10: Granite & Garnet,
Mendocino State Beach -
Antonio Nguyen



11: Red Realgar
Crystal - Joan
Schramm



12: Poppy Jasper &
Red Beryl - Kyle
Van Woerkom

Pun-ishment

Geology rocks, but Geography is where it's at.

The miner got sick of his job because it was just boring.

That rock was magma before it was cool, know what I mean?

You know the old saying—igneous is bliss.

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>

Information on Shows

2026

August 15–16, 2026 – Tehachapi

Tehachapi Valley Gem & Mineral Society

Tehachapi Senior Center, 500 East "F" Street,

Tehachapi, CA 93561

Hours: Sat 9–5, Sun 9–4

Contact: travis462@outlook.com

Web: <https://www.tvgms.net/>

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

September 19–20, 2026 – Arcadia

Pasadena Lapidary Society

Arcadia Masonic Center, 50 W. Duarte Rd.

Hours: Sat 10–5, Sun 10–4

Contact: (626) 260-7239,
marcia.pls.emails@gmail.com

Web: <https://pasadenalapidary.org>

September 26–27, 2026 – San Luis Obispo, CA

San Luis Obispo Gem and Mineral Club

Alex Madonna Expo Center

120 Madonna Rd.

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Hours: Sat & Sun 10–5

Contact: 2026show@slogem.org

Web: slogem.org/gems-by-the-sea

October 3–4, 2026 – Anderson, CA

Shasta Gem and Mineral Society

Shasta District Fairgrounds

1890 Briggs St.

Hours: Sat 9–5, Sun 9–4

Contact:

sgmsrocksredding@gmail.com, (530)
722-7133

Web: shastagemandmineral.org

October 10–11, 2026 – Redwood City, CA

Peninsula Gem & Geology Society
and the Sequoia Gem and Mineral
Society

Community Activities Building

Hours: Sat & Sun 10–5

Contact:

impresciaconstruction@gmail.com
(650) 575-3144

Web: <https://pggs.org/>

October 17, 2026 – West Hills, CA

Woodland Hills Rock Chippers

First United Methodist Church

22700 Sherman Way

Hours: Sat 10–5

Contact: barnettcelia53@gmail.com

Web: <https://rockchippers.org/>

October 17–18, 2026 – Santa Rosa, CA

Santa Rosa Mineral & Gem Society
Memorial Hall, 1351 Maple Ave.

Hours: Sat 10–6, Sun 10–5

Contact: vcommons@outlook.com,
(408) 691-7823

Web: <http://srmgs.org/>

October 24–25, 2026 – Sacramento, CA

Sacramento Mineral Society
6151 H Street

Hours: Sat 10–5, Sun 10–4

Contact: (916) 622-5819,
gemshow@sacgemshow.com

Web: <https://www.sacgemshow.com/>

October 24–25, 2026 – Orange, CA

American Opal Society

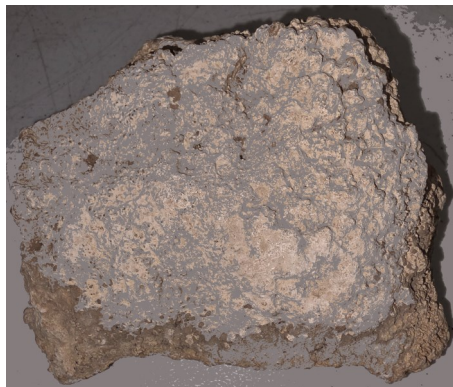
Velvet Rose Event Center, 300 S.
Flower St

Hours: Sat 10–6, Sun 10–5

Contact: (714) 501-9959,
info@opalsociety.org

Web: [http://opalsociety.org//
Opal_Show_Current/
opal_show_current.htm](http://opalsociety.org//Opal_Show_Current/opal_show_current.htm)

Member Displays



Kyle Van Woerkom brought a fossil that he picked up on a beach when he was a kid.

Don't know what to display? Any type of rock, mineral, or fossil (identified or not), your latest project, information on a field trip, ideas for a display case, or anything to do with rocks is appreciated. Sharing items helps to educate all who are attending. Show off what you love, so that we can enjoy it with you.

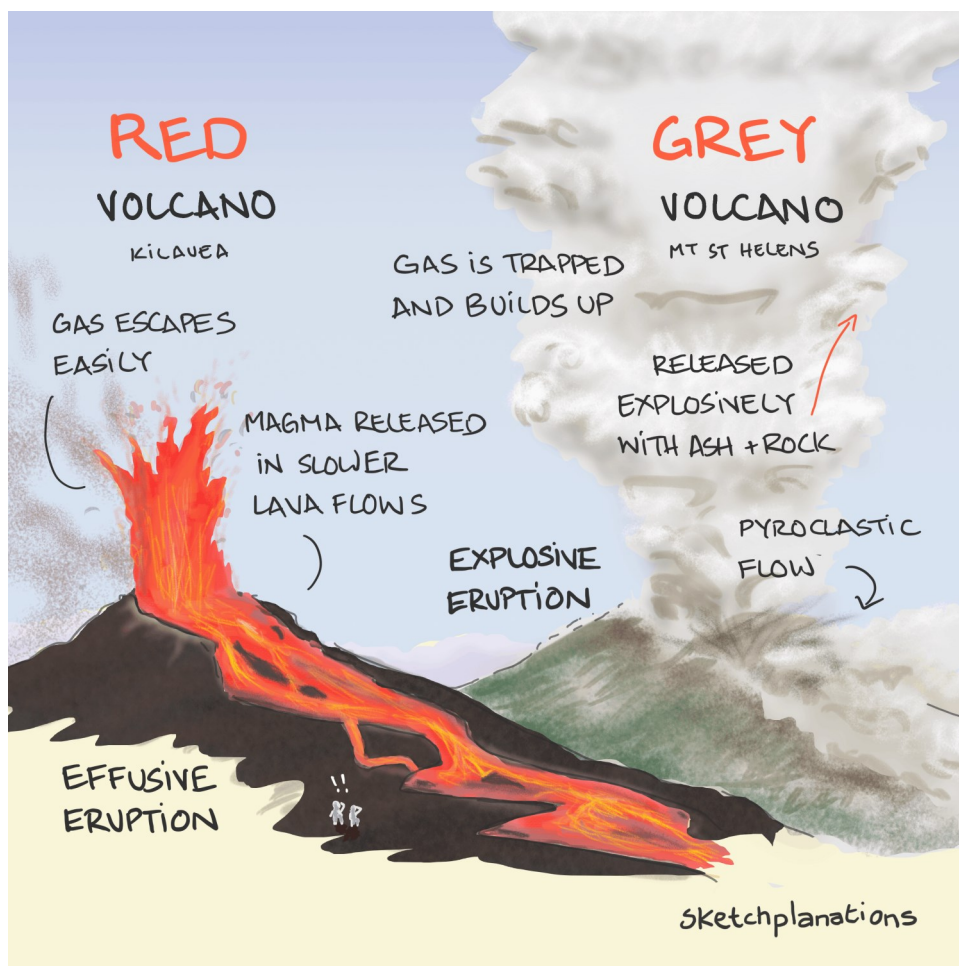


Image: Jono Hey, [Sketchplanations](https://sketchplanations.com/)

FIRE

By John Hawk

- * The Elements of Fire
- * Watching a House Burn
- * Fire Extinguishers, Misc.

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What Elements do You Need for a Fire to Start

The elements required for combustion (Fire) are:

Fuel, Oxygen, and an Ignition Source (Fig. 1.).

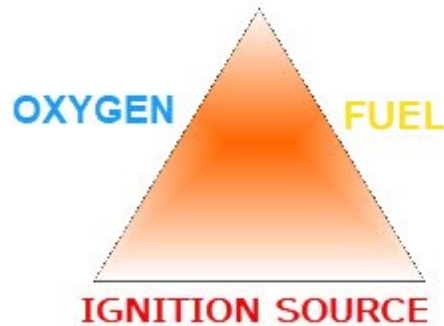


Figure 1. The Fire Triangle

Which of these 3 elements is the best to remove so a fire will not start?

Ignition Source

After a fire has started, which element do you want to take away so that the fire will be quenched?

Oxygen

Sources of ignition may be physical (spark, small flame, cigarette, or a hot piece of equipment), or it may be chemical, such as an exothermic reaction. The easiest and safest way to avoid fires or explosions when working with or storing flammables is by controlling the source of ignition.

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What Governs Fire

The **auto-ignition temperature** is the temperature at which a material will spontaneously ignite. By knowing the auto-ignition temperature, fires can be avoided by keeping temperatures below the ignition point. For example, gasoline can spontaneously ignite when spilled onto an overheated engine or manifold.

Oxygen, the second requirement for combustion, is generally not limiting. Oxygen in air is sufficient to support combustion of most materials within certain limits. These limitations are compound-specific and are called the explosive limits in air.

Once a fire has started, control of the fire can be accomplished in several ways: through water systems (by reducing the temperature); carbon dioxide, halon, or foam systems (by limiting oxygen); or through removal of the fuel (by shutting off valves or other controls).

The **Flash point** is defined as the minimum temperature required for a material to release enough vapors to form an ignitable mixture in air if a spark is provided. Many solvents, like acetone, have flash points that are lower than room temperature.

Another factor that relates to flammability is the vapor concentrations in air. The lowest concentration is called the **Lower Explosive Limit (LEL)**. Concentrations lower than the LEL contain too little fuel; they are too "lean" to ignite. The **Upper Explosive Limit (UEL)** is the highest concentration that can support combustion. Levels above the UEL are too "rich" because the fuel is displacing the necessary amount of oxygen.

The concentrations between the LEL and the UEL are considered to be the flammable range.

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Examples of Flammable Range

Rubbing Alcohol 2.0 – 12.7 %

Alcohol (Ethanol) 3.3 – 12.7 %

Ether 1.7 – 36.0 %

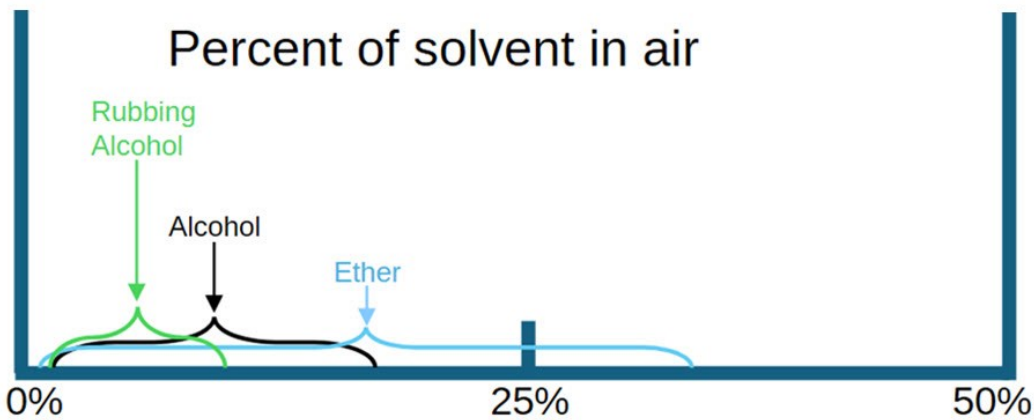


Figure 2 (Flammable range chart for the first 3 solvents)

Gasoline 1.4 – 7.6 %

Natural Gas 5.0 – 15 %

Hydrogen gas 4.0 – 74 %

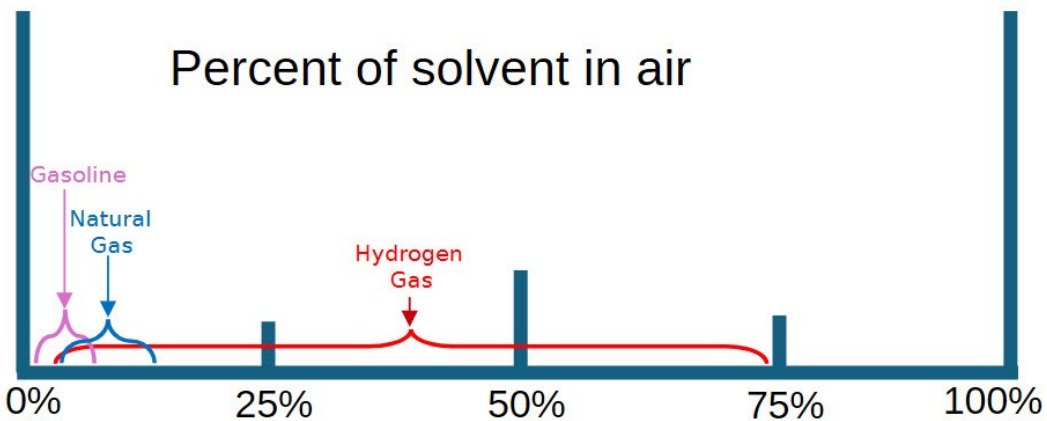


Figure 3 (Flammable range chart for the last 3 solvents)

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Experience a Real House Fire

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zeiN_A-OSt8

Skip the ad, then start watching at 1:50 and stop at 7:20.

Understanding Fire Extinguishers and How to Use Them Properly

Deciphering a Fire Extinguisher:

All fire extinguishers have a combination of 1 to 3 of these 3 letters: A; B; or C, and Numbers.

What the letters mean:

A: Solid items that leave ash, like wood, paper, cloth, trash, and plastic.

B: Flammable liquids and gases, like gasoline, oil, paint, and propane.

C: Live electrical equipment, like plugged-in appliances, computers, and wiring.

What the numbers mean:

Before the A: This number, multiplied by 1.25 gives the equivalent power of gallons of water. (Example: A 2-A rating equals 2.5 gallons of water).

Before the B: This number shows the square footage of a liquid fire the extinguisher can put out. (Example: A 10-B rating handles 10 square feet).

The C rating: This letter has no number. It only means that the inside material is electrically safe and will not carry an electric shock back to you.

There is actually a D-rated fire extinguisher, but that is specifically for combustible metal fires. You'll usually find these at Universities and manufacturing businesses.

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How to Properly Use a Fire Extinguisher to Put Out a Fire

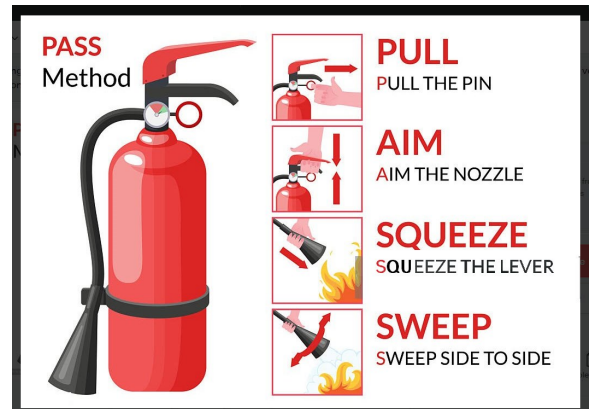
Remember this acronym, PASS

P: Pull the Pin,

A: Aim low at the fire,

S: Squeeze the handle of the extinguisher,

S: Sweep the extinguisher side to side.



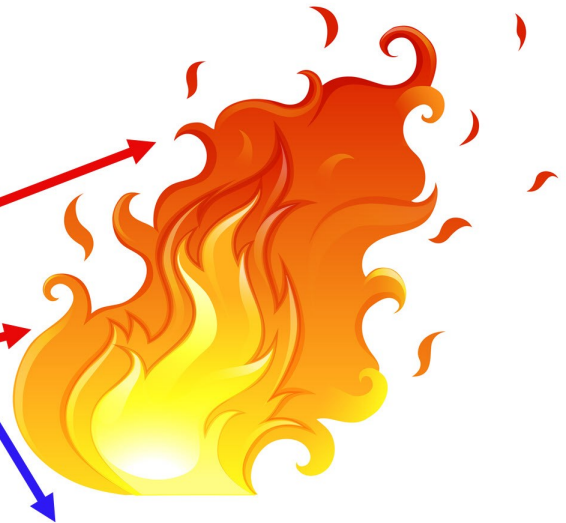
{Editor's Note: Make sure that you will be able to pull the pin, before there is a fire. We had an extinguisher whose pin I could not pull when there was a fire.

A halon fire extinguisher does not leave a mess of powder to clean up after!}

Aim the nozzle of the
fire extinguisher here

Not here

Or here



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Fire Intelligence

If you can't put a fire out within 30 seconds; get out and call 911!

Kitchen Fires

- * If a pot or pan catches fire on the stove – do **NOT** try to move this item over to the sink to try and put it out.
- * You could spill an oil fire and make the fire worse.
- * If you have curtains by the sink, then they could catch fire.
- * Trying to use water from the sink to extinguish the fire would cause the fire to spread wildly.

OPTIONS

- * Turn the stove off!!!
- * Put a lid on the pot/pan,
- * Place a very damp towel over the pot,
- * Use baking soda or salt to smother the fire.

Put smoke detectors in every room of your house (bathrooms optional);

- * Change batteries once a year.

Have at least one (1) carbon monoxide detector in your home.

THE END

{Modified from John Hawk's presentation slides.}

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: TBD
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](tel:408-265-1422)

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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.