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December 2025 Newsletter

Message from the President

December is an incredibly busy month for everybody! The highlight of the month for me is the Club's annual holiday party (details below). We eat, socialize and have the most crazy White Elephant gift exchange. It gets so exciting! I also hope you will consider reaching out with a reply to this email, sending your ideas, feedback and constructive suggestions for the Club. The most wonderful email I will receive is an offer to do a task, no matter how small! Just email info@durangorocks.org.

For the love of minerals and metals, happy holidays!
Cynthia Pugsley, President

Annual Holiday Party

Don't miss the Annual Holiday Party this Monday Dec 8 from 6 to 9 pm. Bring a potluck item to share AND a wrapped gift from each person to add to the gift exchange. It's a fun and festive time together!

New Year's Eve Party

One party is never enough! Get 2026 off to the right start at the **Rock and Roll New Year's Eve Party** on Wednesday Dec 31, starting at 6 pm until ... whenever we decide. The party will be at the Gem Club and is open to Club members. Bring an appetizer or potluck item to share, your own favorite beverage, and a couple of small prizes to give away for party games. Let's **metamorphose** those **sedimental** habits into **igneous** energy this New Year!

Fieldtrips

Field trips are taking shape for 2026 to collect petrified wood, rhodonite, rhodochrosite, amethyst, fluorescent rocks and more. If you would like to lead a trip, please help us build a full calendar of rockhounding and geology destinations. Watch for the field trip calendar to be released in early March.

Video Testimonial

Would you be willing to make a short video showing some Love-for-the-Club? These shorts will help launch a membership drive in February. COVID took a big and long-lasting bite out of the Club's membership and it needs a boost to get it back. You could make a video of yourself at the Club or selling your goods or wrapping handmade presents or admiring your rock collection! If interested, please reply to this email for more details. The sooner we get your video clips into the editing pipeline, the sooner they will be ready for an early spring release.

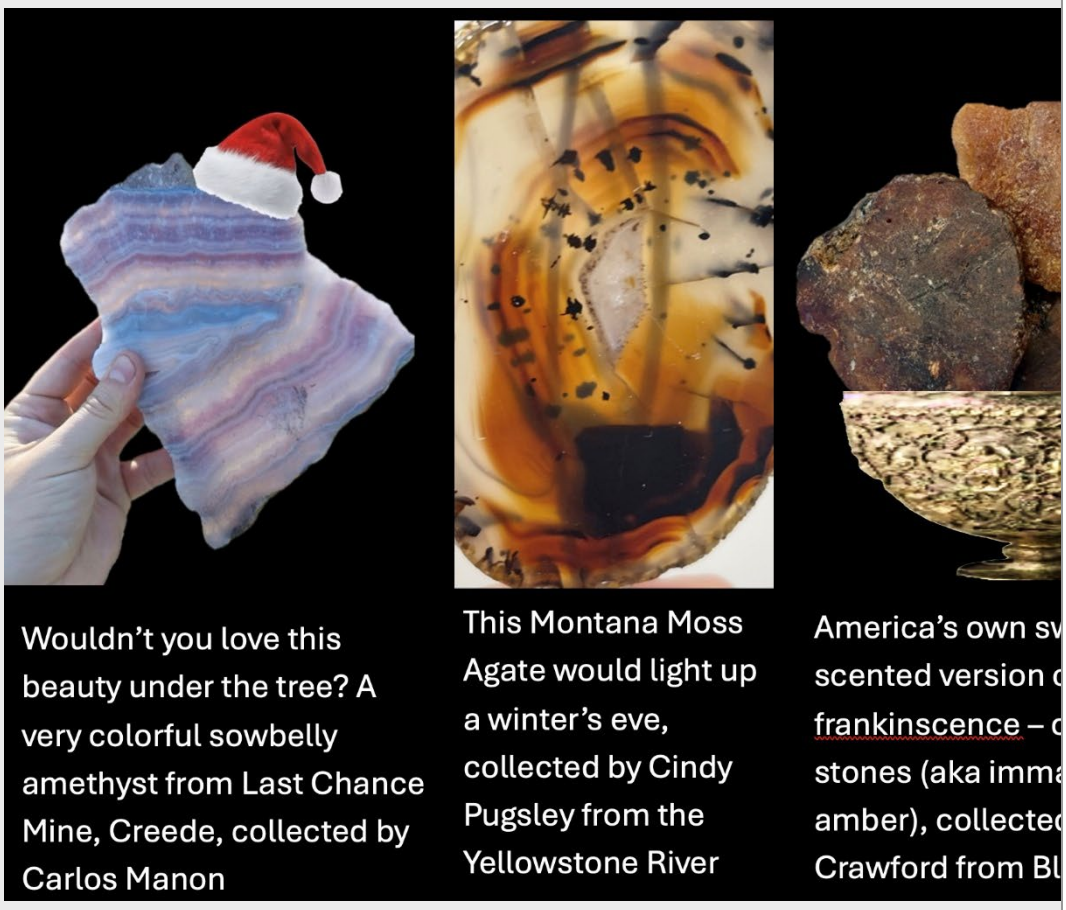
Gem Show Meeting

The first Gem Show Planning Meeting of the year will be held **Wednesday January 7** from 5:15 to 6:30 pm, and every first Wednesday of the month thereafter, until the Show is held July 10, 11 and 12 this summer. There are **many easy tasks at the Gem Show**, such as organizing a geode booth, arranging a caterer for the dealer's meal, recruiting food trucks, marking the outdoor areas or filing papers. **Please get involved with a**

task that is just your size. Volunteers have free admission to all three Show days.

Merry Minerals and Happy Rock Hunts in 2026!!

Our Shop Stewards shared these holiday themed rocks for your enjoyment.



Calendar Items. For more details, visit www.durangorocks.org/events.

- Dec 7, 10 am - 2 pm – **Cutting and Polishing Cabochons** with Joel Arnold. To register, contact Joel at 970-247-5140 or joelrecuerdo55@gmail.com

- Dec 8 – 6pm to 8 pm – **Holiday Party and Potluck.** Bring a potluck item to share and one wrapped gift per person to exchange.
- Dec 12-13, 5-9 pm and 1-5 pm - **Intro to Silversmithing Statement Ring Class** with Carlos Manon. To register, contact Carlos at 970-779-1548 or los.manon@gmail.com.
- Dec 14, 4-6:30 pm, **Santa's Workshop** with Charlotte Lenssen. In this short class you will make simple copper and silver earrings. To register, contact Charlotte at 970-799-8950 or charlotte_lenssen@yahoo.com.
- Dec 24 & 25 – Holiday Closure: no open shop.
- Dec 31 – **Rock & Roll Party,** 6 pm until whenever. Members only. Bring a potluck or appetizer item to share, your beverage of choice, and a couple prizes for party games. At the Gem Club, 2351 N. Main Street, Durango
- Dec 31 & Jan 1 – Holiday Closure: no open shop.
- Jan 7 - 5:15 to 6:30 pm - **Gem Show Meeting** at Club
- Jan 10-11, 2-6 pm both days - **Intro to Silversmithing Statement Ring Class** with Carlos Manon. To register, contact Carlos at 970-779-1548 or los.manon@gmail.com.
- Jan 14 - 5 - 6:30 pm - **Board of Directors Meeting** at Club
- Jan 24-25, 8:30 am to 4 pm both days - **Intro to Lost Wax Casting** with Jaymus Perry. To register, contact Jaymus at 970-422-2490 or email him at jwperry@citlink.net.

Guest Article: FoldForming
by Jama Crawford

Metalsmithing is an ancient art form. Today's methods look very much like metalsmith practices from thousands of years ago. Sure, the invention of the gas torch a couple centuries ago was a great convenience! But lung-powered blow pipes invented thousands of years before did the same thing. The goldsmith in this ancient Egyptian mural is using his blow pipe and tongs to solder together metals. Notice the hot blue flames rising from his work bench!

By most accounts, there have been no significant metalsmith innovations in the last few thousand years, except one! It happened only 40 short years ago in a graduate art program in New York State. Its late discovery is especially remarkable because it required no new tools or technologies. This method is called **Foldforming**.

Meet the Inventor. The next few beautiful images are from the artist and inventor, Charles Lewton-Brain or from his 2008 book *Foldforming*. He also hosts a Facebook group called *Foldforming Central* where metalsmiths can learn more about these techniques and see work by other artists. There are many video links to methods, as well as ideas for patina, on his Facebook page.

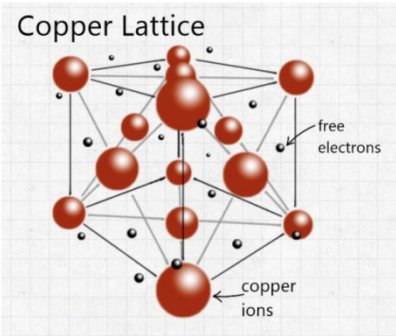
Organic Forms. Foldforming involves folding, hammering, annealing, and unfolding sheet metal to produce three-dimensional shapes that would be exceedingly difficult to produce by any other means. Many pieces resemble objects found in nature, for good reason. Curves and curls in biology occur when one edge has more cell division than another edge. In metals, when one edge has more hammer blows than another, you can obtain a nearly identical organic shape.

Utility. Foldforms are used to make jewelry, sculptures, and household items, as well as large outdoor art installations. Foldforms are often added as embellishments to more conventional metal work, such as on candlesticks and lamps.

Metal Choices. Copper, silver and gold, known as the "coin metals," are unusually malleable (easy to shape) and ductile (easy to stretch thin) when

compared to other elements. They are very well suited for foldforms. Metal alloys such as sterling, brass and welding steel can also be fold-formed, but these stiffer metals require more frequent annealing. By the way, annealing means to heat the metal with a torch until it relaxes back to a pliable state.

Copper is a popular choice because it is economical and can be hammered down to 15% of its original thickness before you need to anneal it again. Fine silver is a close second, albeit pricier choice, as it can be hammered down to 25% of its original thickness before annealing. Due to the intense hammering, even thin, soft metals end up with considerable strength and rigidity.



Taken from RF Photonics lab, Dartmouth Ma

Crystal structure of Copper. Each copper crystal is a tiny cube (think of one cube from a pair of dice). One copper atom sits at each corner (8 corners) and one atom sits in the center of each face of the cube (6 faces), for a total of 14 copper atoms making up the most basic copper crystal. In a fresh sheet of metal, these crystals will be fairly uniformly distributed, and snugly packed. In copper (as well as silver and gold), the outer electrons are not bound to any single atoms. Instead they flow like an "electron sea" throughout the entire piece of metal. These freely moving outer electrons are why these metals conduct electricity so well, and why you can hammer them so thinly. When you hammer, the metal atoms easily slide past one another without breaking any electron bonds.

Damage to the Crystal Structure. But hammering and folding eventually deforms and damages the crystal structure, creating stiffness and resistance. Any further hammering might cause the metal to crack. At this point the metal is called "work hardened." It must be annealed again if you wish to move the metal any further.

Not too hot, not too cold. While heating with a torch, the metal must get hot enough to help the deformed crystals relax, reorganize and regrow. The metal is annealed when you see an orange flame (the result of oxides burning) bouncing

off the metal. Flip the metal and heat until the orange flame bounces off the other side too. Remove the torch. Beware of getting the metal too hot or the crystal structure will break down, and metal atoms will randomly clump together. An irregular internal structure makes the metal brittle and likely to fracture.

Jewelry Making. Here are samples of foldform jewelry from my teaching collection. All of them involve a simple fold (or two), hammering, annealing, and an exciting "reveal" when you unfold! It's a fun, quick, and relatively inexpensive method to make beautiful and dimensional forms.

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