TAR HEEL ROCKHOUND

FEBRUARY 2026

Catawba Valley Gem & Mineral Club, Inc.

2026 Officers and Committees

President:	Ben Houston 704-284-2565	Education:	George Max 828-328-9107
Vice President:	Joan Glover 828-446-7633	Show Chairman:	Dean Russell 828-303-1448
Treasurer:	Terry Russell 828-303-1563	Scholarship:	George Max 828-328-9107
Secretary:	Dean Russell 828-303-1448	Field Trip:	
Editor:	Tracie Jeffries 828-430-1341		

Club Address: PO Box 2521, Hickory NC 28603-2521
Regular Meetings: Second Tuesday, 7:00 PM
St. Aloysius Catholic Church, 921 2nd St. NE Hickory, NC
Annual Dues: Family, $25, Individual, $18

The purpose of the Club is to increase the individual's knowledge of the earth sciences and to aid in the development of lapidary and related arts and skills; to promote fellowship and exchange of ideas; to hold exhibitions, contests, lectures and demonstrations for educational purposes; to help interest more people in the gem and mineral hobby; and to capture and preserve the beauty of nature, the arts, and the works of man.

CATAWBA VALLEY GEM AND MINERAL CLUB, INC.

Web Master: Mike Streeter

http://www.cvgmc.com

Editor: Tracie Jeffries,
3118 Barus Street, Valdese, NC
botanynerd89@gmail.com

INSIDE

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Thanks to everyone who participated in the bragging rights contest and grab bag packing. I look forward to hearing about your adventures next year. The upcoming show is quickly approaching, consider helping out if you can. Stay safe during this wintery weather.

Ben

CVGMC MINUTES FOR JANUARY 13, 2026

The January 13, 2026 meeting of the CVGMC was called to order by President Ben H. at 7:00 PM.

Visitors: Ashley S.

Program: CVGMC Bragging Rights by Rick G., et al

Best Collected 2025 – Tracie J.

Best Crafted 2025 – Betty H.

Best Purchased 2025 – Richard A.

Minutes: None from December 2025 Annual Christmas party and Auction

Treasurer Report: Bank balance was reported.

Education Committee: Tracie reported the library system have requested to have programs.

Show Committee:

1. The CVGMC Annual Show is March 6-8, 2025. We will be using the Hickory Room
2. Please consider where you can volunteer to help with the show.
3. Grab bags will be fill on January 17, 2025 at St. Andrews
4. Theme of the Show is "Home Grown"
5. Contact Tracie J. about having a display case.
6. Club t-shirts were discussed
7. Will have free admission coupons available.
8. All adult patrons will receive wrist band to wear for the show.
9. Volunteer

Field Trip Report: None

Old Business: None

New Business:

1. CVGMC T-Shirts – One free t-shirt to those who work at the show. T-shirts can be purchased for $15.00 each.

2. New display case will be available for the show.

3. Norma R. won the CVGMC Wildacres Scholarship in honor of Judy G. by the family.

Announcements:

1. Make sure you send in your membership forms and dues.

2. Phyllis B. and George B. passed away recently.

3. CVGMC Board of Directors voted to raise the donation to the EFMLS Wildacres Scholarship Fund to $150.00

Closing of Business: The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Dean Russell, Secretary

FEBRUARY PROGRAM

The February program will be members sharing how they got started rockhounding and/or in the lapidary arts. Joan needs several more people to volunteer to speak for about 5 minutes. If you would like to volunteer please contact Joan.

GEM AND MINERAL SHOW - HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Ticket Sales and Grab Bags: The March 6-8, 2026, Gem and Mineral Show is just around the corner and one of the areas, we need volunteers for is with ticket sales and grab bags. Terry Russell is soliciting volunteers NOW to help sell tickets and grab bags at the front tables. We will need 4 people per shift (3 for ticket sales and 1 for grab bags). We need another person at the ticket table this year because we will also be giving out wrist bands. Terry would like to have the work schedule finalized shortly after the February meeting so she has time to communicate the process to everyone. PLEASE CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING – we had several new volunteers at last year's show and it was a great way for new and returning members to get involved and get to know other club members. Terry will have a signup sheet at the February meeting. We will need people to fill in the following time slots:

Friday, March 6 and Saturday, March 7

- 9:45am – 1:00pm
- 12:45pm – 4:00pm
- 3:45pm – 6:00pm

Sunday, March 8

- 9:45am – 1:30pm
- 1:15pm – 5:00pm

Exhibit/Show Cases: If you plan on doing a show case, please fill out the form supplied in this newsletter. Remember the theme this year is “Home Grown”. The idea is that each case will highlight minerals of North Carolina. If you are entering a show case you will be able to come in Thursday March 5th afternoon to set your case up.

Demonstrations: We need volunteers to demonstrate lapidary arts such as cabbing, faceting, and wire wrapping especially for Saturday. If you are interested, please see Tracie J.

Mini Mine: With the passing of George B., we need volunteers to help run the mini mine especially on Saturday and if possible, on Sunday. This is a very popular activity with the smaller children. If you are interested, please see Tracie J.

Kid’s Corner: We would like to run this all three days of the show. It is a favorite of adults and children where they can touch, explore, and ask questions about rocks, minerals, and fossils. Rick and Joan do a great job but they do need help.

Set Up: We need volunteers to help set up Wednesday March 4th in the afternoon, especially tables and exhibit cases.

Take Down: What goes up must come down! We need volunteers to help take down tables, exhibit cases, and pack materials for storage on Sunday March 8th in the afternoon.

Many of you have already volunteered to help in many of these areas.
Thank-you for all you do!

CLUB PICNIC

I need help planning the club picnic in May. The picnic will be May 12th at 6 PM. The location will most likely be Glen Hilton Memorial Park in Hickory. I will need some people to

arrive early and help set up the tables. I also need someone to cook the hamburgers and hotdogs. If you can help, please contact Tracie.

GEOLOGY MADE EASY: TUFF

By Tracie J.

First, let's clear up some terminology. Tuff is sometimes confused with the terms Tufa and Tephra. Tufa is a form of limestone created when calcium carbonate precipitates out of water/solution. Tephra is a generic term for fragmental material ejected during a volcanic explosion, also referred to as pyroclasts. Tephra is primarily classified by size (See Table 1). Tuff is an extrusive, igneous rock produced by the lithification of ash, other pyroclasts, and rock fragments created by a volcanic explosion. This sounds simple, but it's not! The term Tuff can broadly refer to all consolidated pyroclastic rock, or specifically to rocks composed of at least 75% ash and less than 25% lapilli (See Figure 1). There is also the term 'tuffaceous' used to describe Tuff-like rocks that contain 25 – 75 % volcanic ash.

Even in the strict sense, Tuff rocks can vary in chemical composition, particle size, degree of lithification, fragment types, and other factors. Therefore, Tuffs are usually described with modifiers. But in general, most 'true' Tuffs are felsic, light-colored, light-weight, soft, and porous. If they have clasts, the latter are angular.

VOLCANIC TEPHRA

SIZE	NAME	DESCRIPTION
< 2 mm	Ash	Ash may be composed of small particles of mineral crystals, Lithic (rock) particles, and/or volcanic glass
2 – 64 mm	Lapilli	Small blobs of molten or semi-molten lava ejected from a volcano, there are different types of lapilli depending on their composition and aerodynamic forces that shape them as they fall and cool
➢ 64 mm	Bombs	Bombs are larger blobs of partly molten lava ejected from a volcano, they are often shaped by aerodynamic forces as they fall and cool
➢ 64 mm	Blocks	Blocks are solid when ejected, typically derived from 'country rock'

TABLE 1: Summary of sizes of various tephra or volcanic ejecta.

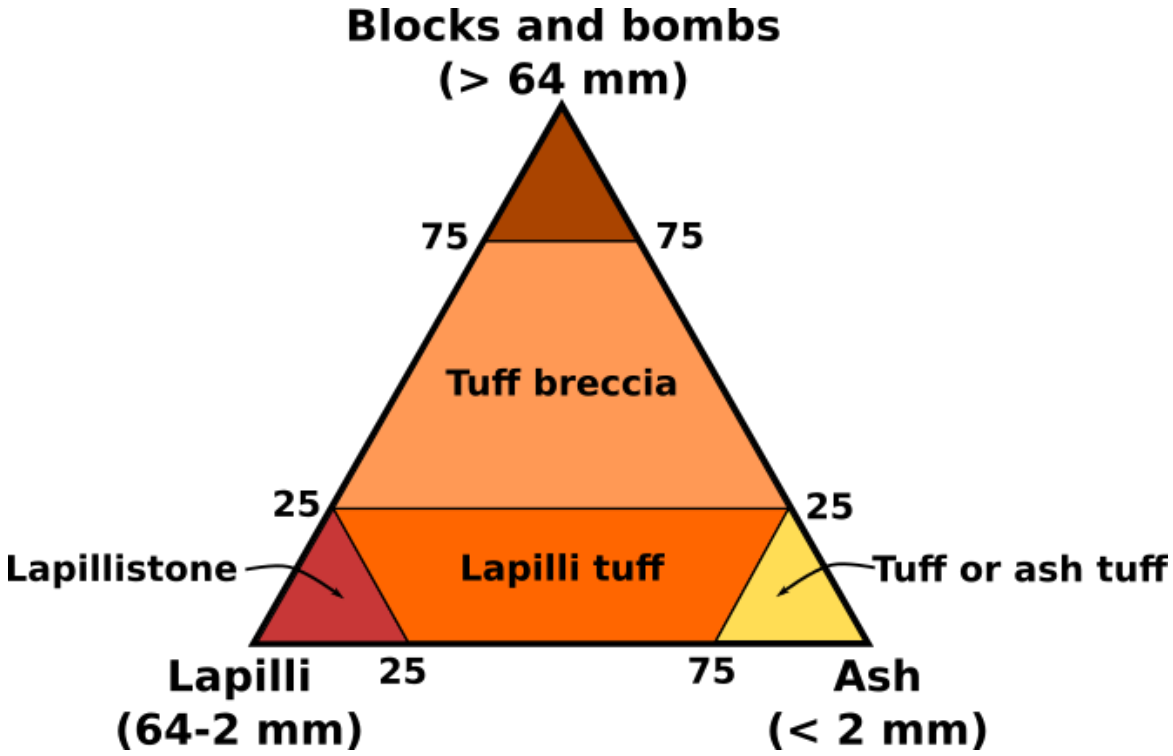

FIGURE 1: Classification of pyroclastic rocks based on percentages of ash, lapilli, and bombs/blocks. Modified from Le Maitre, 2005
https://www.alexstrekeisen.it/english/vulc/pisolitictuff.php

Tuff can potentially form from any volcanic eruption that produces tephra but, generally the more explosive the eruption the more tephra ejected (See Images 1 - 3). Conditions that favor violent volcanic eruptions are silica-rich, felsic, high viscosity magmas (Rhyolitic or Andesitic), that have a high gas content. Over time the resulting layers of tephra become compressed and lithified into different volcanic clastic rocks such as volcanic breccia and tuff.

Tuffs that result from ash-fall tend to be well-sorted by size, heavier clasts fall out first, and commonly show layering. The further from the source the thinner the deposits, and the smaller the clasts. Tuffs formed from pyroclastic flows tend to be poorly sorted, with resulting rocks having a variety of clast sizes and fragment types.

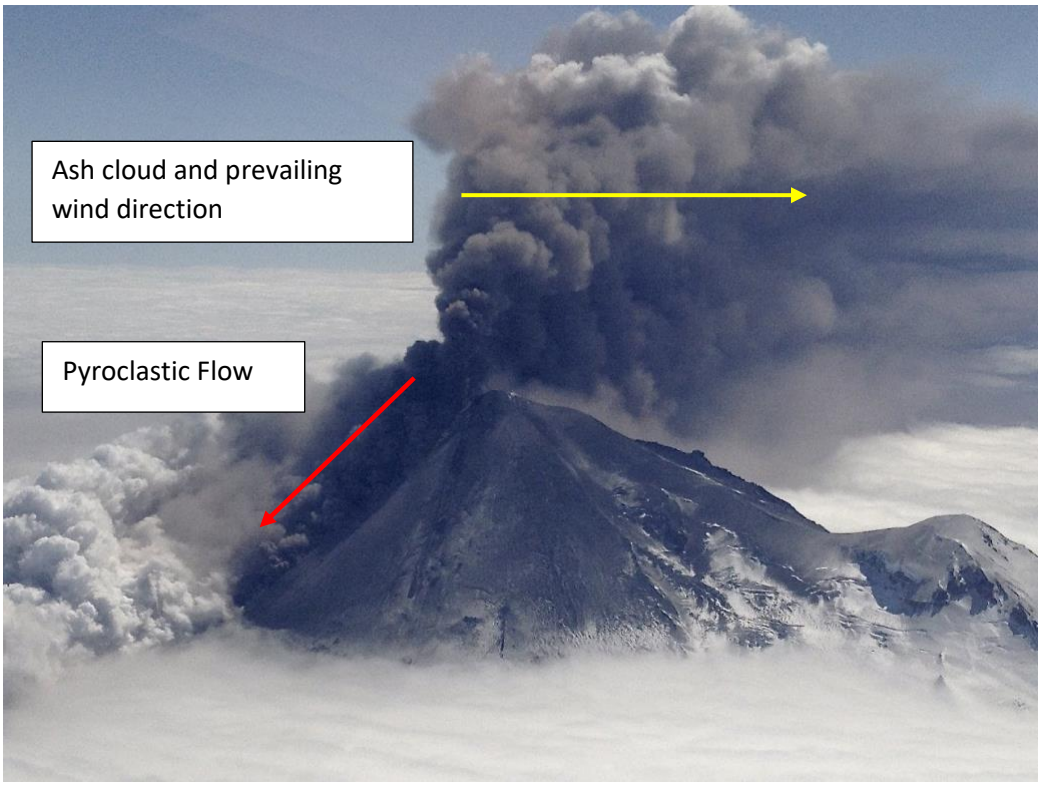

IMAGE 1: This is the May, 2013 eruption of the Pavlof Volcano in Alaska. Note the pyroclastic flow on the left and the large ash cloud. Photo Credit: Brandon Wilson/AV

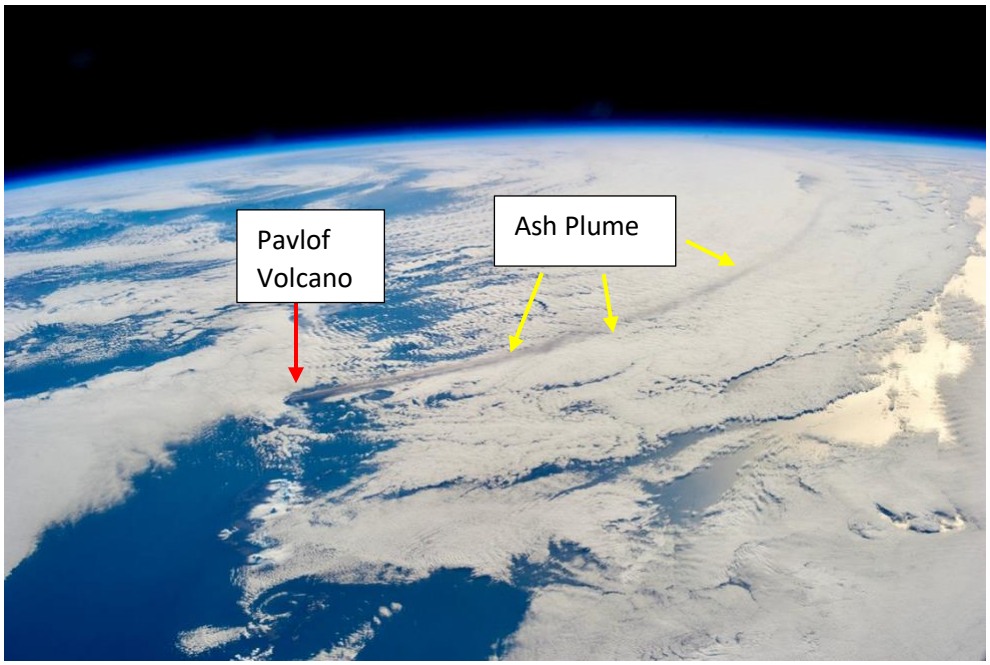

IMAGE 2 Note the ash cloud traveling, thinning, and curving (due to Earth's rotation) away from the volcano. Ash falling close to the volcano will be coarser-grained, while ash fall further away will be finer-grained. Photo of the May, 2013 Pavlof eruption taken from the International Space Station.

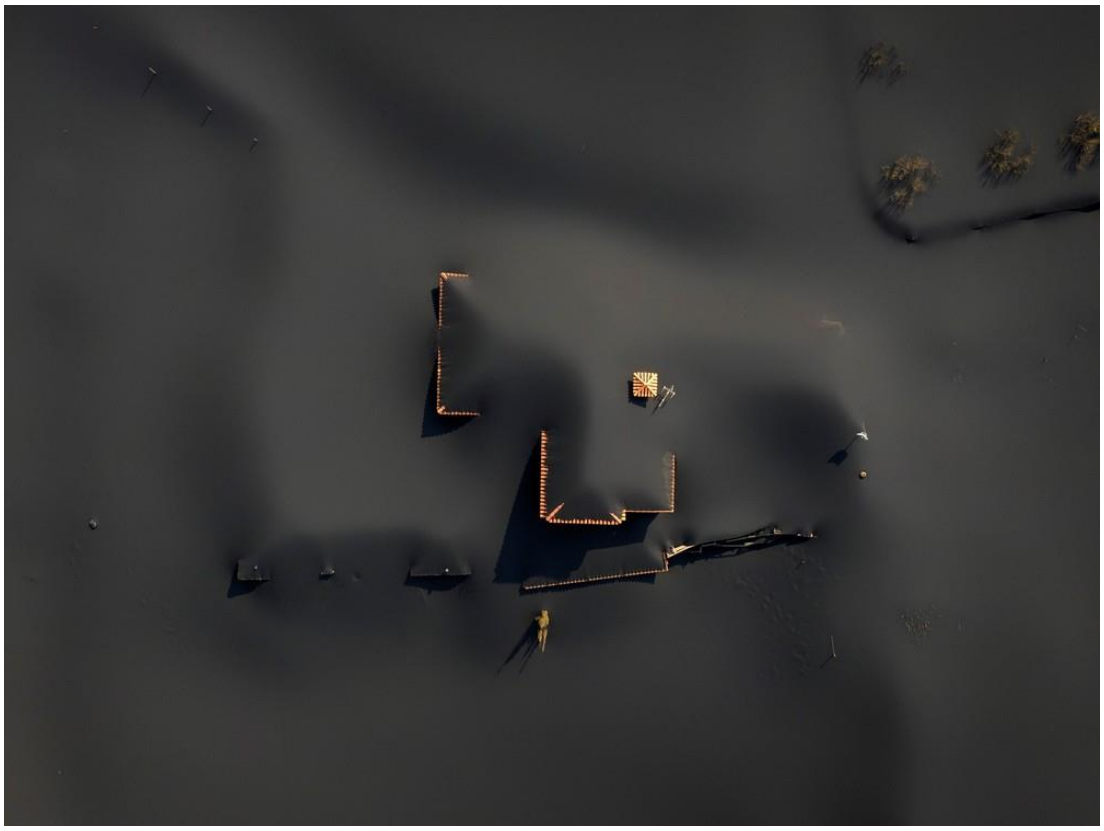

IMAGE 3: In 2021 the Island of La Palma in the Canary Islands experienced several volcanic eruptions from the La Palma volcano. In the image above a house is almost completely buried by volcanic ash. Photo by Emilio Morenatti

Tuff rocks are very diverse and classified by several traits. By studying Tuff classification, appropriate modifiers can be used when describing and naming specimens. Please note that classification systems and terminology may vary slightly depending on the source.

Chemical Composition:

- Rhyolitic Tuff - forms from felsic or silica-rich magmas. These tuffs are light in color, ranging from white, tan, gray, or pink. Most Tuffs are felsic because these viscous, silica-rich magmas tend to produce violent eruptions that create lots of ash (See Images 4, 6 - 12)
- Andesitic Tuff –forms from magma intermediate in composition between Rhyolitic and Basaltic magmas. Intermediate magmas tend to be rich in plagioclase feldspars and amphiboles. These Tuffs may be reddish, brownish, grayish, or greenish.
- Basaltic Tuff – forms from mafic magma that is low in silica and rich in mafic minerals such as pyroxenes and olivine. Basalt Tuffs are not common because the hot, fluid, mafic magma is not conducive to the violent eruptions that produce ash. These Tuffs may be black, dark green, or red in color (See Image 16).

- Ultramafic Tuff – forms from ultramafic magma that has little to no silica but is rich in olivine and/or serpentine. This type of tuff is rare (See Image 13).

Particle Size:

- Fine Tuff – or dust tuff has ash particles less than 1/16 mm.
- Coarse Tuff – has ash particles 2 -0 1/16 mm in size.

Fragment Types (See Figure 2):

- Vitric Tuff – composed of glass shards from pumice and obsidian (See Image 4 and 12).
- Crystal Tuff – composed of individual mineral crystals such as quartz, feldspar, and biotite.
- Lithic Tuff – composed of lithic fragments, generated by the volcanic explosion (See Image 10). These fragments may be a combination of pre-existing igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic rocks, and/or current ejecta/pyroclastics.
- Transition Tuffs - these are a combination of two of the three above (See Images 6, 8, 9, and 11). For example, vitric-crystal, vitric-lithic, or crystal-lithic.

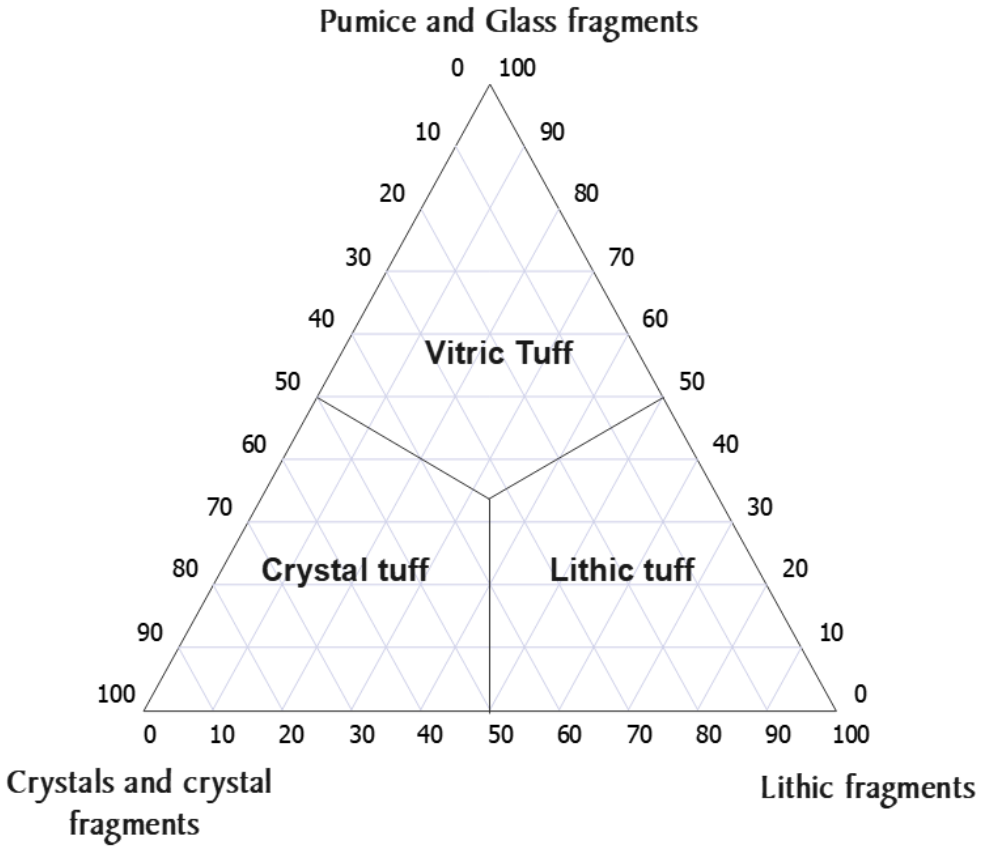

FIGURE 2: Classification of Tuff based on fragment types. https://geologybase.com/tuff/

Formation/Deposit Types:

- Ash-flow or Ignimbrite Tuff – forms from hot, fast-moving pyroclastic flows (See Images 6, 7, 9, and 12). The ash and other pyroclasts are partly melted, soft, and sticky. As they flow downward and mix, they fuse. These Tuffs are commonly referred to as 'welded Tuffs'. Welded Tuffs are poorly sorted and contain a mix of rock types and clast sizes. Note that not all ignimbrite Tuffs are welded.
- Ash-fall Tuff – formed from ash and other pyroclasts falling from an ash cloud (See Image 3 and 4). Material falling closer to the volcano is poorly sorted and contains larger clasts. Material falling further from the volcano is more sorted and composed of finer-grained clasts. Some of this material may also be 'welded'. When the hot, soft, sticky clasts fall and land, they fuse or weld upon impact.
- Reworked Tuffs – form when existing ash layers or tuff weather/erode, are transported by wind or water, and lithify with new clasts in a different environment. These can be further classified as aeolian (wind-deposited) or fluvial (water-deposited) Tuff. An example is Tuffaceous Sandstone. Let's look at and practice naming some Tuffs!

IMAGE 4 and 5: This is a sample of pure Tuff, it is 100% ash. This Tuff can be described as felsic, Rhyolitic, vitric, (Pumice based), ash-fall, non-welded, and loosely lithified. It is very light-weight, porous, and soft. It was collected from Cudahy Mine, in Last Chance Canyon, California. During the early 1900's this material was mined for 'Old Dutch Cleaner', an abrasive cleaner similar to Ajax, and Bon Ami. Image by Tracie J.

IMAGE 6: This is a sample of Bishop Tuff collected near Mammoth, California. This is a good example of an ignimbrite/ash-flow Tuff. The hot ash (light gray) and pumice clasts (dark gray, angular fragments) welded together when they fell. So we could use modifiers such as: felsic, Rhyolitic, ignimbrite/ash-flow, welded, and vitric-crystal (it is mostly vitric with some mineral crystals such as biotite, quartz, and plagioclase). Photo by Tracie J.

IMAGE 7: This handsome sample is Resting Springs Tuff, deposited during the Miocene. Note the layered appearance and flattened clasts of obsidian and pumice. This sample could be described as felsic, Rhyolitic, ignimbrite/ash-flow, and densely welded. Densely welded Tuffs are uncommon. It was collected in Inyo County, California. Photo by Tracie J.

IMAGE 8: These unique rock formations are found in the City of Rocks State Park, New Mexico. The structures are composed of Kneeling Nun Tuff and were shaped by milions of years of erosion and weathering. Photo by Tracie J.

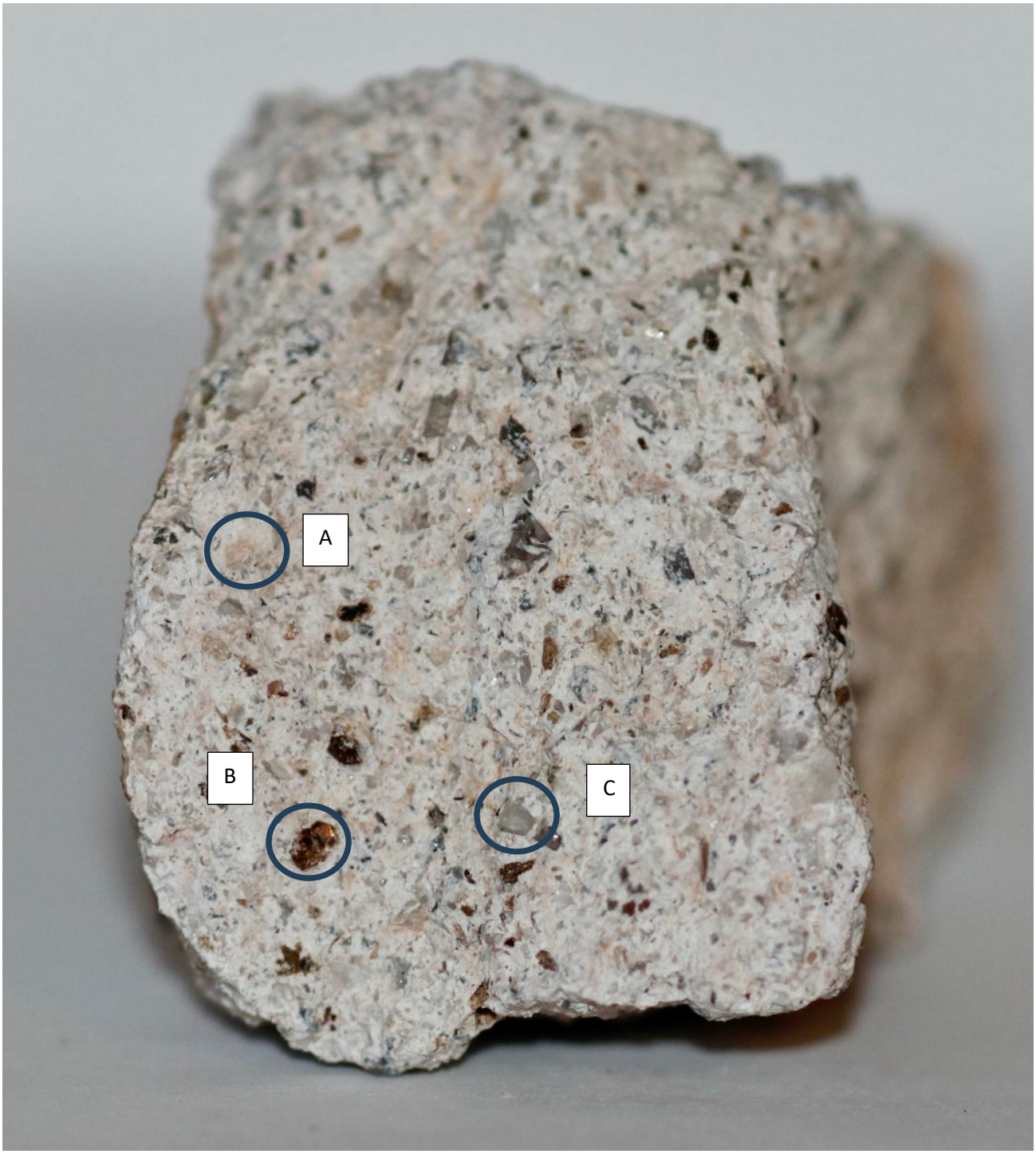

IMAGE 9: This is a sample of Kneeling Nun Tuff collected near the City of Rocks State Park, New Mexico. This Tuff can be described as felsic, Rhyolitic, welded, ignimbrite/ash-flow, and transitional. Specifically, it is a vitric - crystal Tuff since it contains both Pumice fragments, and individual mineral crystals. The pink area in 'A' is a clast of Pumice, the dark area in 'B' is Biotite, and the gray area in 'C' is quartz. Please note, as with all Tuffs, the composition, degree of welding, and other factors can vary slightly through-out the deposit. Photo by Tracie J.

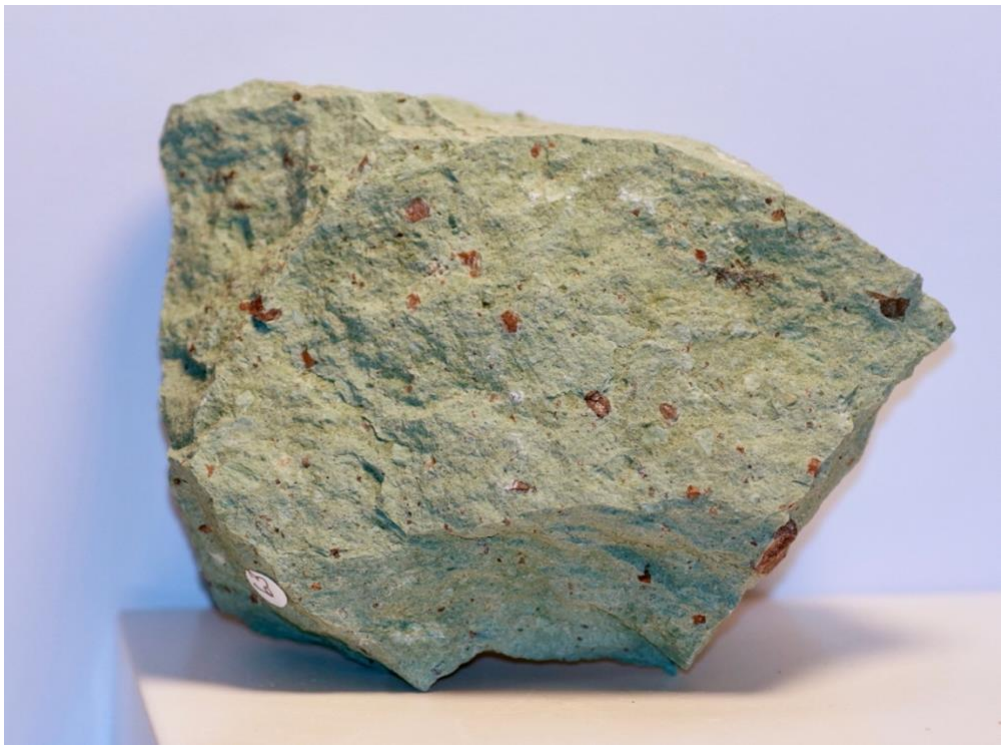

IMAGE 10: This is a unique welded Tuff stained green by copper. It is a good example of a lithic Tuff. Note the darker, angular clasts that were torn from the vent walls when the volcano erupted. It was collected from the Blue point Quarry, in Kern County, California. Photo by Tracie J.

IMAGE 11: This is an example of a Tuff Breccia with a lot of interesting traits. It has numerous angular clasts. The white clasts are Pumice and the darker clasts originated from the walls of the volcanic vent. Hence, it is a vitric-lithic Tuff. It can also be described as felsic, Rhyolitic, and welded. This is a good example of the term 'Tuff" being used in a broad context. This sample is obviously not 75 % or more ash. It was collected in the Last Chance Canyon area in Kern County, California. Photo by Tracie J.

IMAGE 12: These odd structures are pyroclastic Tuff balls. Their formation is not fully understood but think of a cartoon snowball rolling down a snow-covered slope getting larger and larger! These Tuff balls can be described as felsic, Rhyolitic, welded, ignimbrite/ash-flow, and vitric. The larger, darker clasts are pumice. These uncommon balls were collected from a small area of the Round Mountain Pumice Deposit in Inyo County, California. Photo by Tracie J.

IMAGE 13: This is part of a core sample taken from the Victor Diamond Mine in Ontario, Canada. It is a nice example of an ultra-mafic Tuff, observe the greenish tint. The rock is Kimberlite, a common source of Diamonds. Note that Kimberlites are a complex group of rocks and not all Kimberlites are Tuffs. There is an ultra-mafic bluish Laprolite Tuff (similar to Kimberlite) found at the Crater of Diamonds State Park, Arkansas. Photo by Tracie J.

Compared to many other rocks Tuff is relatively light-weight and resistant but yet easy to work with and shape. This makes it ideal construction material for buildings, and walls (See Images 14 and 15). It can also be used:

- to make concrete,
- as a filtering material,
- as a scouring agent in cleaners (See Image 5),
- as a medium for art, sculptures, and reliefs (See Images 14 and 16),
- as landscaping material,
- as crushed aggregate,
- in the production of geothermal energy,
- by scientists to learn about ancient volcanic activity and magma composition, and ancient life (See Image 17),
- and for many other uses.

IMAGE 14: This decorative entrance is carved from pink, rhyolitic Tuff. It the front of a church at Colditz Castle, Germany.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colditz_Castle

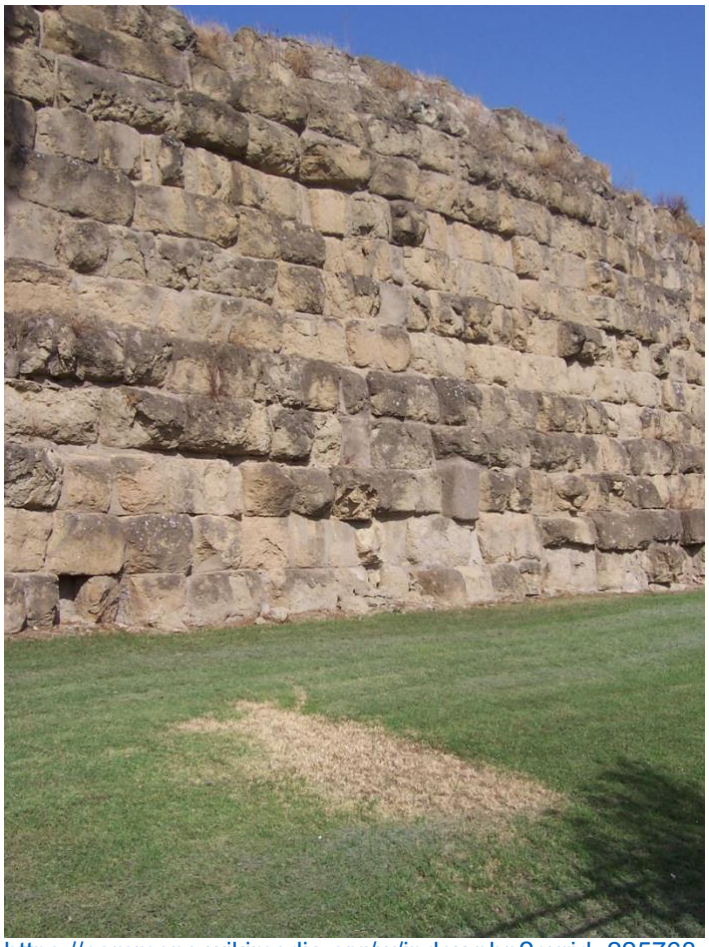

IMAGE 15: An ancient Roman wall constructed with blocks of Cappellaccio Tuff in the early 4th century BC. CC SA 1.0,

https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=225763

IMAGE 16: The Moai are humanoid statues carved by the Rapa Nui people, on Easter Island between 1250 and 1500. Most of the figures are carved from basaltic Tuff, hence their dark coloration.

This work has been released into the public domain by its author, Aurbina at English Wikipedia.

IMAGE 17: Some of the earliest hominin footprints were discovered the 1970s at Laetoli, Tanzania. Three individuals left footprints in an ash layer produced by a volcanic eruption. This is now referred to as Footprint Tuff. Scientist have also documented prints of other organisms in the Tuff, both vertebrate and invertebrate.https://iiif.elifesciences.org/lax/19568%2Felife-19568-fig7-v1.tif/full/1500,/0/default.jpg

To be honest I thought an article on Tuff would be easy and straight forward. I didn't realize how complex Tuff petrology is, in other words, Tuff was tough! However, I learned a lot and enjoyed the research. I hope the reader has a better appreciation for this amazing rock.

FREE CLUB COMPLIMENTARY PASSES

This year we are trying something new and allowing each CVGMC member to give out as many free complimentary passes as they want. There is no limit on how many passes you can give to family, friends, church members, coworkers, etc. for free admission to the Gem Show. The passes no longer need to be signed by a club member. You just need to print and distribute a hard copy of these passes. Please remind everyone that these passes are good for ONE free admission - each person attending the show needs to have their own pass. The complimentary passes are attached below in this newsletter.

2026 MEMBERSHIP DUES

This is a reminder that the membership dues are now being collected. Included in this month's bulletin is a blank 2026 Membership form. Terry will also bring some blank forms to the February meeting. This membership form must accompany your dues for your name to be included on the 2026 club roster. Please print clearly and legibly on the form so that your information can be updated accurately. Honorary members must also fill out the form each year in order to keep the club records up to date and to maintain your honorary membership status. You can send your payment and form to the Club PO Box (address on the membership form) or directly to Terry Russell at the following address: 5254 Olde School Drive

NAME BADGES

We are getting ready to order name badges for several members of the club who have requested them. If anyone else is interested in purchasing a name badge they are $10 each. Please see below for a picture of the badge. The badge has a magnetic backing and the piece above it (in the picture) is placed on the backside. Please contact Terry Russell (828-303-1563) by Saturday, February 7th if you are interested in ordering one and let me know the exact spelling of your name. If you are paying by check please make it payable to: CVGMC We will purchase the name badges after that date in order to receive them before the Gem Show.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR AREA

WHAT	WHEN	WHERE
Catawba Valley Gem, Mineral, Fossil and Jewelry Show	March 6 – 8th Fri. and Sat 10:00-6:00 Sun 10:00-4:00	Hickory, NC Hickory Metro Convention Center 1960 13th Ave Drive SE
Annual Gastonia Gem, Mineral, and Jewelry Show	March 14 -15 Sat 10:00-6:00 Sun 10:00-4:00	Gastonia Farmers Market Address: 410 E Long Ave Gastonia Farmers Market
Tar Heel Gem and Mineral Show	March 27 -29 Fri 3:00-7:00 Sat 10:00-6:00 Sun 10:00-5:00	NC State Fairgrounds, Kerr Scott Building Address: 4285 Trinity Rd NC State Fairgrounds Raleigh, NC 27607

Hickory, NC 28602

2026 MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION FORM

Date: _____

Please Check all the Appropriate Boxes

☐ **New Member** ☐ **Renewal**

(New members must attend TWO meetings and may apply for membership at the second meeting)

☐ **Single $18/yr** ☐ **Family $25/yr** ☐ **Honorary $0/yr**

** ☐ **Onetime fee for name badge $10/person** ☐ **Quantity**

**** Spelling on badges ONLY IF PURCHASING any:**

_____

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY & FILL IN ALL INFORMATION

NAME: _____

SPOUSE'S NAME (family membership): _____

ADDRESS (Street): _____

ADDRESS (City, State, and Zip Code): _____

MINOR CHILD (family membership): _____ Age ____

MINOR CHILD (family membership): _____ Age _____

HOME PHONE: _____ CELL PHONE: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

***** Bulletins will be distributed by E-MAIL only *****

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: CATAWBA VALLEY GEM & MINERAL CLUB, INC.
MAIL TO: Catawba Valley Gem & Mineral Club, Inc
c/o Terry Russell
PO Box 2521
Hickory, NC 28603-2521

DUES (NEW MEMBERS ONLY) SHALL BE PRORATED AS FOLLOWS:
January 1 – June 30: full amount of annual dues
July 1 – September 30: 50% of annual dues
October 1 – December 31: full amount of annual dues shall apply as payment for the following year

FOR USE BY TREASURER ONLY: Amt Rec'd _____ Check # _____ Date _____

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Club Member Complimentary Pass
Good for one FREE ADMISSION

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Volume 56 Number 2

Club Meetings

2nd Tuesday of Month, 7:00PM

St Aloysius Catholic Church

921 2nd Street NE Hickory, NC

Tar Heel Rockhound
Tracie Jeffries Editor
PO BOX 2521
Hickory NC 28603-2521
http://www.cvgmc.com/

Organized 1969