



## FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

*Barbara Green*



As we approach the end of 2011, it signals the end of my year as your President of SFMS. I have been honored to be able to serve you in this capacity. Thank you to all of you who have worked with me this year. This was a team effort, and I appreciate all that you have done.

As I look back over the past year, I can see some pluses -- we have two more clubs than what we had back in January. I have been delighted to see so many new faces at our SFMS meetings. Newly elected club presidents have taken their duties seriously and are attending federation meetings.

We also have some minuses. People who have served SFMS so well in the past years, are no longer able to continue, so we have positions to fill. This is, of course, an ongoing problem, and I hope some of you new folk will think about stepping up and saying "I'll help". You won't have to do it by yourself. There will be plenty of help from some of us old-timers, but we can't do it all alone.

I was looking at some copies of the Lodestar from 1980 and the major problem that president, Charles Tinman, had then was getting people to volunteer to fill offices. It's not a new problem and I don't think it will ever go away.

One of the purposes of the SFMS as stated in our Constitution and By-Laws is to promote education. We do this by having the four workshops each year.

### ARTICLE II - PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES

*Section B. To promote the educational, scientific, and recreational aspects of the hobby in the subjects of Mineralogy, Geology, Archaeology, Lapidary Arts, and other subjects related to the various Earth Sciences.*

We need the clubs to participate in this. The schedule will be coming out soon for the 2012 workshops. Please encourage your members to come to the workshops. Not only is it a good educational bargain, but it's fun!

I hope you will give Jason Hamilton, our incoming 2012 President as much help as you have given me. I look forward to maintaining a relationship with the SFMS and encourage you to step up and be counted.

## CARL'S EDITORIAL COMMENTARY



This edition's lead article is about imitation opals and a Minneapolis crook making a killing till caught.

It's time for all SFMS Clubs/Societies to renew their membership. Though the three-page form has been sent to an appropriate representative of each club/society, we reproduce the application herein so that it's readily available.

Our Safety Committee covers "sneaky things" ranging from banks to politicians.

See the 2011 Junior of the Year report on Page 10 as well as an Education Update and notice of the 2012 Newsletter/Bulletin contest.

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# THE SOUTHEAST FEDERATION OF MINERALOGICAL SOCIETIES, INC.



A Non-Profit, Non-Commercial, Non-Political Organization and Regional Federation of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies

## PURPOSE:

*To bring about a closer association of Clubs and Societies devoted to the study of Earth Sciences and the practice of Lapidary Arts and Crafts in the Southeast part of the United States.*

## OBJECTIVE:

*To cooperate with similar Federations to promote public interest in the Earth Sciences and the conservation of natural resources.*

## 2011 SFMS OFFICERS

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**Articles for the Jan 2012 Lodestar are due by Dec 30, 2011.**

## DMC FIELD TRIPS

**Jan 7, 2012:** Fort Drum, Okeechobee County, FL. The Treasure Coast Rock & Gem Society in Vero Beach, FL is hosting a field trip to the Fort Drum Crystal Mine collecting honey colored calcite in fossil clam and whelk shells, shark teeth, and bone fragments. This is a fee area: \$20/adult & \$10 for children under 12.

Field trips are open to all members of clubs associated with the DMC program of the SFMS Field Trip Committee and to all members of SFMS clubs/societies who provide their membership with SFMS liability insurance. Because of insurance requirements, members of the general public are NOT invited to these or any DMC program field trips.

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## UPCOMING SHOWS

**January 13-15, 2012:** Largo, FL. Pinellas Geological Society 36th Annual Show. Location: Largo Cultural Center, Parkside Room. Contact: Hugh Sheffield at 727-894 -2440 or 727-707-3236.

**January 15-16, 2012:** DeLand, FL. 39th annual show; Tomoka Gem & Mineral Society; Volusia County Fair Grounds, State Rte. 44; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$4, children 12 and under free. Contact Florence D. Nordquist (386) 226-4032; e-mail: fndesign@aol.com; Web site: [www.tomokagms.org](http://www.tomokagms.org)

**January 28 & 29, 2012:** Panama City, FL. Panama City Gem & Mineral Society 21st Annual Show. Location: Bay County Fairgrounds. Contact: Joseph Schings at 850-871-1846 or by email at [mojo3002@comcast.net](mailto:mojo3002@comcast.net).

**February 11-12, 2012:** Merritt Island, FL.- The Central Brevard Rock & Gem Club. Symphony of Gemstones Festival, Kiwanis Island Park, 951 Kiwanis Island (on Hwy 520 west of Walmart). Hours: Sat & Sun 10-5. Adults \$4/day. Demos, door prizes, & lapidary exhibits. Contact show chair Ray Huntington 321-799-8536.

**February 25, 2012:** Lakeland, FL. Imperial Bone Valley Gem, Mineral & Fossil Society, 8th Annual Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show & Sale; Sat: 10-4, First Presbyterian Church, 175 Lake Hollingsworth, Lakeland. Show contact: Jim Reed, 863-644-6665 Email contact: [rocks57@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:rocks57@tampabay.rr.com) <http://www.bonevalley.net>

**February 29– March 1, 2012:** Panama City, FL. Panama City Gem & Mineral Society. Bay County Fairgrounds, 2230 E. 15th St. Contact: Joseph Schings, 850-871-1846 or e-mail: [mojo3002@Comcast.net](mailto:mojo3002@Comcast.net)

**March 2-4, 2012:** St. Petersburg, FL - The Suncoast Gem & Mineral Society. 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Gem, Jewelry & Mineral Show and Sale, Minnreg Building 6340 126<sup>th</sup> Ave. N., Largo, FL 33773. Hours: Fri & Sat 10-6, Sun 10-5. Free parking. Contact Bill Schmidt, Show Chair, 727 822-8279 or e-mail contact [SGAMsgemshow@gmail.com](mailto:SGAMsgemshow@gmail.com). See <http://www.sgams.com/Shows/show.html>

**March 24-25, 2012:** Tampa, FL. "Fossil Fest 2011"; Tampa Bay Fossil Club; Florida State Fairgrounds, US 301 and I-4; Sat. 9-6, Sun. 10-4; fossils, artifacts, gems, minerals, shells, exhibits, "how to" seminars, kids' games, fossil mine, raffles, door prizes, silent auction; contact Barbara Fite, (813) 977-0892; e-mail: [bfite@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:bfite@tampabay.rr.com); Web site: [www.tampabayfossilclub.com](http://www.tampabayfossilclub.com)

**April 28-29, 2012:** Memphis, TN - Memphis Archaeological and Geological Society. Memphis Mineral, Fossil, Jewelry Show "The Earth Wide Open". Memphis International Agricenter, Expo Center, West Pavilion & A and B-wings 7777 Walnut Grove Rd. Memphis, TN. Hours: Sat 9-6 and Sun 10-5. Adults \$5.00, Children 12 and under \$2.00. Scouts free. Portion of admission benefits the Ronald McDonald House of Memphis. Contact W.C. McDaniel 901-274-7706 or email [w.c.mcd@att.net](mailto:w.c.mcd@att.net) See [EarthWideOpen.com](http://EarthWideOpen.com).

### Please Note

To ensure your show is listed here, send a written notice to the Lodestar Editor: Carl Talbott, 216 Spring View Drive, Murphy, NC 28906 or e-mail [dtalbott@bellsouth.net](mailto:dtalbott@bellsouth.net). SFMS clubs/societies are also encouraged to register their event listings on the SFMS website at: [www.amfed.org/sfms](http://www.amfed.org/sfms).

## MINERALOGY

### Opals: Natural, Synthetic or Fraudulent

Early last March, federal authorities in Minneapolis arrested an Australian man on charges of selling more than \$2 million worth of imitation opals, which he claimed were rare natural specimens from Down Under. According to a criminal complaint reported in the Pioneer Press, Robert John Kane sold more than 50 nationwide jewelry distributors rights to territories along with an inventory of “fake” opals through newspaper ads that promised profit margins between \$324,000 and \$810,000 per year.

Like selling low-cost beachfront property in Montana, the opal scam is a typical example of how an unscrupulous person can take advantage of a gullible gemstone buyer, said reputable opal dealers. But far more problematic is the industry-wide confusion surrounding what constitutes an imitation opal versus a synthetic opal.

“This is a very difficult area in terms of definition,” said Kenneth Scarratt, lab director of the American Gem Trade Association’s Gemological Testing Center. “There are synthetic opals out there, and there are imitation opals with close properties to synthetics.” A synthetic stone has “virtually identical physical, chemical, and optical properties to its naturally occurring counterpart,” said Gerry Manning of Manning International, the oldest opal dealer in the country. “In other words, a synthetic gemstone is almost identical to a natural gemstone of the same type, but for the fact that it is made in the laboratory and not in the earth.”

But with opals, it’s not unusual to find synthetics that contain a high plastic content – so much so that they display different chemical and physical properties from their lab-grown counterparts. These gems are probably closer to being classes as stimulants, or imitation opals, because they will not meet the FTC’s strict requirements for labeling something a synthetic. Trouble is, without an in-depth laboratory analysis, many buyers will find it very difficult to identify these “pseudo synthetics.”

“Any lab that gives a cursory examination and calls something a synthetic without actually looking at its molecular structure is doing a major disservice to the industry,” said Manning. “Empirical testing has great limits. It does not yield the info necessary to determine if something has plastic or a super silica product.” Manning said the problem has been worsened by the popularity of marketing gemstones on television, where “an unnatural demand has created an unnatural supply.” While exact numbers are impossible to pin down, industry sources said there are far more natural and imitation opals in the marketplace than true synthetics, which are produced by only a handful of reputable companies, including Gilson and Inamore, both based in Japan.

The imitation synthesis of opal – there are no bounds to its production,” said Scarrett. “You can go on producing it forever. The volume is as large as you want to make it.” So, how can you protect yourself from being duped into buying imitations that are passed off as synthetic, or even natural, opals? If you’re not willing to go through destructive analysis to get yourself a comprehensive lab report, use the following guidelines:

- (a) Look for the telltale “lizard-skin” or “chicken-wire” patterns on the opal to determine whether it’s been manufactured in a lab [ed. comment: of course, a badly crazed natural opal could have the same look].

- (b) The easiest way to determine origin is by price. "If it's too cheap, it's got to be imitation," said Manning. Simulated opal is generally about 100 to 1,000 times cheaper than comparable color and quality natural material, while a true synthetic sells for about 10 to 100 times less than natural. (Kane paid between 50¢ and \$1.50 per carat for his opals.)
- (c) "If it sticks to the touch, that's another indication that it's an imitation," said Manning.
- (d) Try this [potentially destructive] experiment: hold the sample in a pair of tweezers and light a match under it for about 20 seconds. "If it carbonizes quickly, that will indicate a high content of resins," said Manning. "Hold it longer and if you get an odor, that will indicate that it's glued" – and therefore imitation.

**[Editor's Note:** This article, by an unidentified author, found on the internet is linked to [www.pinfire.de](http://www.pinfire.de). Many an opal buyer (including my wife during a trip to Australia a decade ago) have been fooled into buying imitation opals for natural opal prices. Nonetheless, with regards to item (d) above, this editor does not recommend putting a flame to a valuable opal.]

**[P.S.** And now for **Chapter 2 of this Kane story** ... again from the internet ... now, we don't know if Kane was delivering capped doubles or the standard variety. Had Kane argued that doublets are still opals, just not solid natural opals, he may have had a legal leg to stand on. Take an opals class at William Holland School of Lapidary Arts, and you will be able to recognize the difference.]

A Minneapolis, MN man, Robert John Kane, pleaded guilty on Oct 1, 2011 to orchestrating a \$2.3 million mail-fraud scheme involving the sale of opal distributorships, mostly through newspaper ads.

More than fifty people paid him between \$10,000 and \$96,000 for a distribution territory and inventory of gems which they were told came from his opal mine in Australia and could be sold for \$90 per carat.

In fact, they were actually thin slices of opal glued to other cheaper stones, known as "doublets," which came from a Des Moines gemstone distributor and cost him less than \$1.50 per carat.

Kane also pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit fraud and tax evasion while his "national sales director," Gloria J. Quinn, pleaded guilty to conspiring in the scheme.

They both await sentencing.



Club/Society Web Site \_\_\_\_\_  
 Club/Society Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Webmaster \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Bulletin Name \_\_\_\_\_ Published: Monthly\_\_ Bimonthly\_\_ Quarterly\_\_ Other\_\_  
 Editor \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**ELECTED OFFICIALS** (List all officers Elected by membership vote & title of office held)

Month Officers: Elected \_\_\_\_\_ Take office \_\_\_\_\_  
 Officers elected: Annually \_\_\_\_\_ Other (be specific) \_\_\_\_\_

**President** \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**1st Vice President** \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**2nd Vice President** \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Corresponding Secretary** \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Recording Secretary** \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Treasurer** \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Please indicate which officers elect to receive the S.F.M.S. LOADSTAR via email:**  
 President\_\_ Recording Secretary\_\_ Corresponding Secretary\_\_ Treasurer\_\_ Editor\_\_ Other\_\_\_\_\_

**Please indicate which 3 officers wish to receive the A.F.M.S. Newsletter:**  
 President\_\_ Recording Secretary\_\_ Corresponding Secretary\_\_ Treasurer\_\_ Editor\_\_ Other\_\_\_\_\_

**Do you wish to participate in the optional Liability Insurance program?** Yes\_\_ No\_\_  
**If No, do you have liability insurance by EFMLS or a third party insurance?** Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**Insurance Liaison** \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Person in your Club/Society to receive renewal form(s) for next year Renewal in 2013**

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Federation Liaison** \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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**Committee** \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Committee** \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Committee** \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Please include other officers such as directors, additional committee chairs, and other pertinent information about your club or society on a separate sheet of paper.**

**CLUB SPONSORED SHOW(S)**

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Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Show Facility** \_\_\_\_\_ **Show Dates** \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

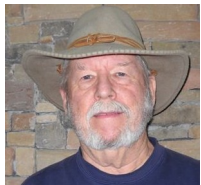
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person submitting this application \_\_\_\_\_

Office Held \_\_\_\_\_

**BE SAFE – BE WELL**

Don Monroe &amp; Linda Behr - Safety Committee

**Sneaky Things**

I dislike sneaky things. When I began this article I began by saying that I hate sneaky things, but I changed that because I do not want to insult anyone and hate is a strong word. The idea for this article came from a long

deceased great aunt who never would tell anyone what she wanted for Christmas. She would only publish a “don’t want” list which we all understood and complied with just like the Marines and other military groups do today when they shout HUA (hoo-ah) which means heard, understood and will comply.

My list of sneaky things is not very long but does have an impact on our health and welfare. Near the top of my dislike list are speed traps. In many of the rural areas of the country speed traps seem to be a popular method of raising money for the town treasury. If you are not a resident of the particular area you may not know that the speed trap exists. Your best indicator is to watch the local drivers in front of you. If they slow down suddenly for no apparent reason, you better slow down until you are driving as slowly as they are.

Bank charges have become very popular and can be levied with little or no warning. These charges are often “greed motivated” and frequently have no relationship to the service rendered by the bank. Think about changing banks.

Thieves, liars and cheats seem to be more prevalent during hard economic times. Never assume that these people are limited to people that you do not know or that they really need the money. As my sainted father often said, you have never really been “had” until you have been taken by a relative or acquaintance.

Health problems can really sneak up on you. Many are diet related such as gout and obesity. I know you may be reading this during the holiday season, and not one of you enjoys overeating more than I do. It is a never-ending fight. Some problems can be the result of an injury and there is nothing as sneaky as phlebitis which can result from a splinter or

a tack in your shoe. It is somewhat uncommon but if you haven’t thought about it in a long time, read up on it. This time of the year is a popular time for colds and flu and stuff like that. Stay away from those who are sneezing and coughing. If your grocery store offers wipes for the buggy handles, use them.

Varmints get hungry in the winter and will go to great extremes to find food (your food). I don’t worry as much about the bears because they were here first and they lack a sense of humor and will protect their young. I have been a hunter all of my life but I will not kill a bear, even the one that keeps getting up on our front porch and eating the bird seed. Rodents I do not like, and I really dislike raccoons because down here many of them are rabid. This is not good. Squirrels, opossums and foxes are fine in my book. According to my brother, who is a wildlife biologist, the opossum is only guilty of being ugly and eating anything but does not carry any disease. (I know some people who may fall in this category).

I will not relinquish the pen until I comment on crooked politicians and those in power at any level in our society. Vote them out wherever you find them.

Last, but not least, we must not forgive those who abuse women, children and the elderly. We can only hope that they will ultimately get what they deserve.

**In closing, we wish all a happy holiday season.**

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**Notice of SFMS’ Executive Meeting in  
Daytona, FL**

Host club: Tomoka Gem & Mineral Society

Location: Comfort Suites  
90 Professional Blvd.  
Daytona Beach, FL 32114

Room cost: \$59.95 per night (including continental breakfast)

Friday, January 13, 7p.m.: Cracker Barrel Discussion

Saturday, January 14, 8:30 am Registration

9:00 am Executive Meeting

Saturday and Sunday (January 14-15): Tomoka Gem & Mineral Society’s 41st Annual Jewelry, Gem, Minerals and Fossils Show and Sale at Volusia Fair Grounds.

## Report on 2011 Junior of the Year

Bonita L Harris, SFMS Youth Resources Chairperson

It was exciting to have had so many Southeast Federation Mineralogical Societies, Inc. (SFMS) **Junior of the Year (JOY) 2011** participants. In all, there were eight wonderful junior rockhounds. This year the top four JOY applicants were two sets of siblings from two different clubs and states. **Erica Nathan** of Tomoka Gem and Mineral Society (TGMS) placed 1st in this prestigious competition. **Matthew Lambert** of North Mississippi Gem and Mineral Society (NMGMS) placed second. **Jett Jackson** (TGMS) at 6 years of age was the youngest participant ever during my years of office. The leaders of the local club and the parents deserve a round of applause for supporting the junior rockhounds in this rewarding endeavor. It is quite a challenge to compile all the points.

Erica will receive a first place standing plaque and mineral/fossil specimen. Matthew will receive a 2nd place certificate and mineral/fossil specimen. Kacie Cox (TGMS), Kevin Dance (TGMS), Jett A Jackson (TGMS), Brittani Lambert (NMGMS), Mitch Nathan (TGMS), and Nicolas Valery (TGMS) will receive "Recognition of Participation" certificates and an award. These certificates and awards will be mailed the first week in December to the club address listed on the SFMS website.

I will not be in this SFMS position next year, but I do want to encourage the clubs to have their junior rockhounds apply for the upcoming 2012 workshop scholarship for juniors and the Junior of the Year 2012 competition later in the year. Information on these opportunities will be posted in SFMS's newsletter, the Lodestar.

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## SFMS Education Update

Kathy Morris, Education Chairperson

I would like to thank Lisa Roberts for doing a wonderful job as Registrar for the SFMS William Holland Workshops the past two years. Lisa had a tough job and handled all situations with tact and courtesy. Thank you again Lisa.

Our new Registrars for the SFMS William Holland Workshops are Addy and Joe DePietro. Addy and Joe have taught for Federation many, many times; know how our Workshops function; and are familiar with many of the students. Thank you, Addy and Joe, for volunteering.

The dates for the 2012 SFMS Workshops are as follows:

Wildacres            August, 20-26, 2012  
                              September 10-16, 2012

William Holland    June 10-16, 2012  
                              October 7-13, 2012

The class schedules will be available January Issue of the Lodestar. Please look for them and sign up for one of our classes. Look for our ad in the Lapidary Journal in January and February.

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## 2012 Newsletter/Bulletin Contest

The entry deadline for the 2012 SFMS Newsletter/Bulletin Contest is January 31, 2012. Please submit your contest category entries to Kathy Morris, Bulletin Chairman, 551 Grayce Lane, Hiawassee, GA 30546. Phone 252-571-5050 (cell). SFMS's 1st place winners are entered in the AFMS competition later this year.

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