



Diablo Diggings

Monthly Newsletter of the Contra Costa Mineral & Gem Society

April 2023

VOL. 71 NO 4

Contents

President's Message.....1
Gemstone Trees......3
Wire Wrapped Pendants..... 9
Promote Our Club..... 11
Display Report.....
Calender.....



President's Message



Wow! March has been an incredibly busy, and wet month. Not to mention windy. I have been busy just keeping my head above water, (yes, the pun is intended). As wet as this winter has been, my fear is that summer will be blazing hot. Momma nature is surely not done with us yet.

The silver lining in all those clouds is that that the high water and erosion may expose new treasures for us to find. We have a rock trip scheduled, (contact Al if you haven't yet and you want to go on April 16th to Mariposa). Mariposa and it's hills are were much of my ill-begotten youth was spent. I am looking forward to visiting them again. There are jaspers and quartz in our local creeks, so bring whatever treasures you find to our next meeting to show us. And remember find a rock or two for the club.

We all need to thank Kelly for the mighty job she is doing, our last speaker on radioactive materials was fantastic. Our next meeting is at Endeavor Hall, but our speakers will be club members. Cheryl Morgan will give a hands-on demonstration of how to create a gemstone tree, **while Kelly Plumb will give a short demo on how to wrap wire on a pendant.** Read how to do these projects in this newsletter and come prepared to play with wire.

Club Details

General Meeting

April 10th 6:30 PM Endeavor Hall Hoyer Hall Clayton, CA. 6pm.

Speaker Cheryl Morgan Kelly Plumb demonstrating wire tree and wire wrap pendants

Snacks

Those asked to bring snacks are.... Suzanne Garret, Louise Gilley, Allan Graff, Mary Hanjes, Donna Heath, Christine Henningson, Don and Margaret Heinrich, Jane Holcomb, Andrew, Janelle, Mike and Nancy Hopkins



Last Call: This is your last opportunity to pay your dues..

Remember.... Everyone is invited, bring a neighbor



Gemstone Trees

As part of our ongoing series of how to articles this month we will be learning how to make a gemstone tree. Wire, beads, a rock and a little glue can let our imaginations fly. It can also produce a marketable commodity. Gem trees are generally created with small, tumble-polished gemstones or beads. Drilled gemstone chips (freeform beads) are inexpensive and commonly used, but rounded and other shapes are also utilized. More advanced specimens use polished small cabochons, or, in non-gemstone versions, fake faceted stones available in scrapbooking supplies.

Some gem trees are built with one gem variety creating a monochromatic vision, while others incorporate multiple colors and gemstone varieties, creating fanciful objects. Those interested in the healing powers of stones often employ multi stone combinations.

To make a gemstone tree you will need:

- Some wire (gold, silver, or copper colored is fine) make sure it's not too thin, yet not too thick. You need 7 'of wire or 200 ''.
- A skewer, nail, or toothpick... for this article we will call it the twister
- You can use any rocks or gems (small ones), as well as non-gem options (shells, glass or plastic beads, et al)
- Decorative thin wire used at the end (optional)
- Rock for the base (pick the rock after the tree is made, so it is the right size)
- Small jewelry pliers and wire cutters
- A hot glue gun or some strong glue

And some patience and practice.

A Discussion of Wire

The lower the wire gauge, the thicker the wire. Thicker wire = usually more difficulty twisting the wires at the end.....BUT the wire must be strong enough to hold the bead or stone glued to it. 20 to 26 gauge works well. How much wire determines the size of the tree. The bigger the tree the lower the gauge....BUT the less flexible the wire the messier the tree. Messy is artistic too. Some advance makers will use multiple gauges to built bigger trees. They will create a "super structure in the trunk and leading out of the main branches which is then supplemented by a higher gauge more flexible wire to perfect the shape. One final point, the color of the wire is another creative choice. A more advanced option is to blend two colors into the design.

A Consideration of Tree Shape

This beginner's project is building a basic tree shape, commonly called a lollipop tree by watercolorists



Beyond this basic shape, which I strongly recommend you practice and play with for several, { dozen? } times until you are feeling confident with it... there are a number of different shapes to consider. Oak trees are just an increased size of the basic starter type. Birch trees are a more organized symmetrical version of the oak. Pine trees are the straight, highly symmetrical form. Achieving symmetry in the design is really a function of the skill of measuring the lengths of wire, and uniformity of wrapping the branches. These are skills achieved with practice so the shape of the tree is a map of one's experience and skill at the artform. At the apex of that roadmap is the weeping willow. One twists a series of beads or loops on each branch in very even, uniform rows.

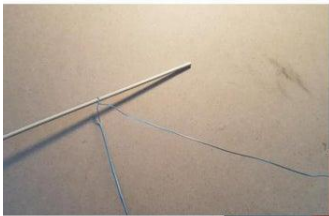
To Build a Basic Tree

The first step is to carefully measure and cut the wire into 4 groups. I strongly recommend a small wire cutter available at any craft or hardware store. Some pliers combined grasping and cutting. Do not use scissors or try and break a wire by twisting it repeated.

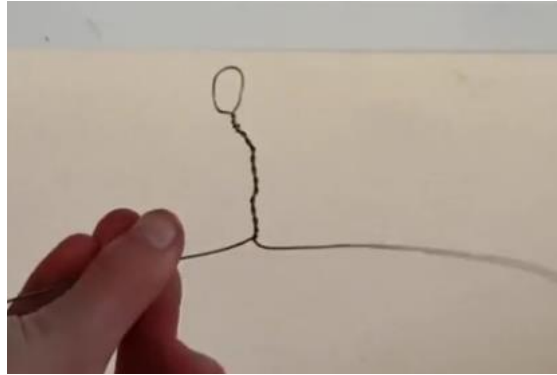
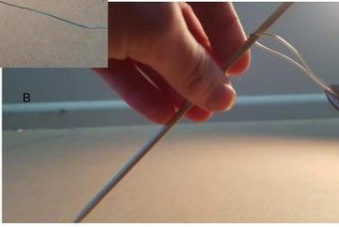
The first group is the smaller branches. Cut 3 wires 16 inches in length. The next group is larger branches. Cut 3 wires 20 inches in length. The 3rd group is the main branch. Cut one wire 40 inches in length. The last group is the trunk and roots, and extra wire. Cut 6 wires 8 inches in length. You should have 4 groups, 13 wire segments total. Cutting a wire too long is ok, cutting it too short is not.

For your first tree, even if you are using beads, make loops on each branch and glue on stones or beads.

Form your first branch using one of the 16 inch wires from the first group. Fold it in half with your twister (toothpick, nail; or skewer) in the middle of the fold Twist the wire so it forms a circle.

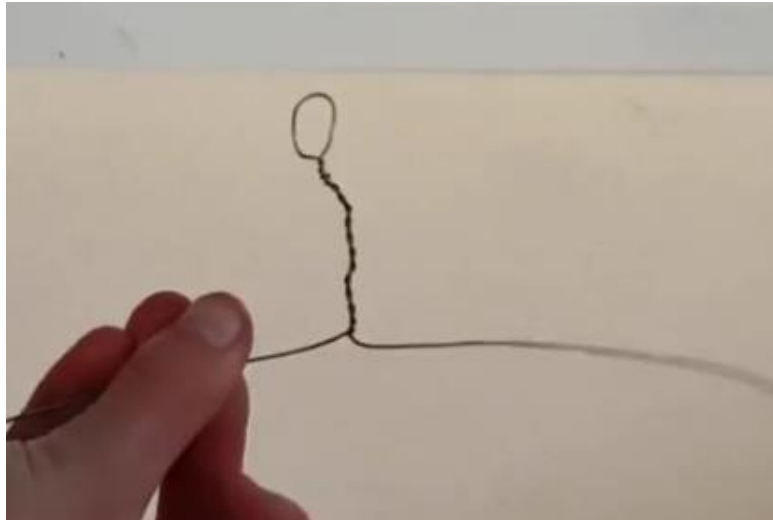


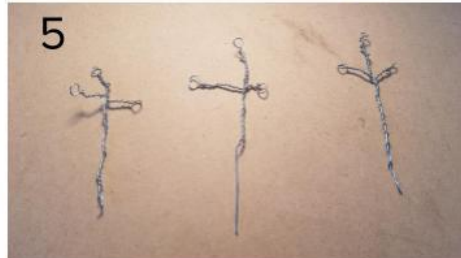
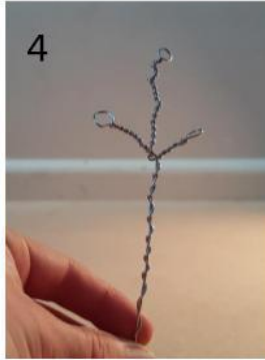
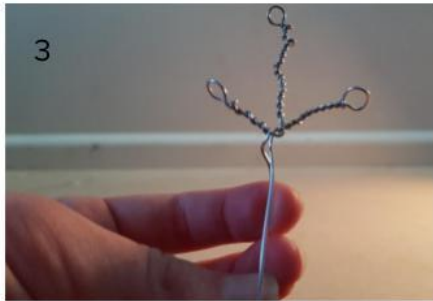
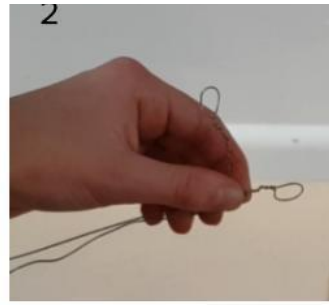
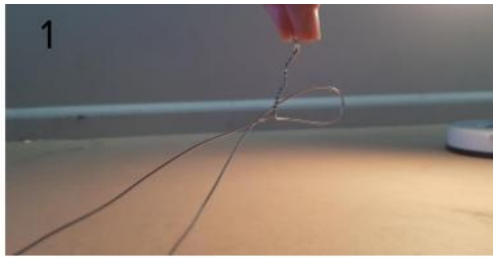
The skewer is used as a handle/crank



Now get your pliers and pinch the wire together about 1 inch down Pinch it tight (but be careful not to cut the wire) and spin the twister around like a crank so it starts to twist the wire together. Twist until it reaches your pliers. Take care to make an even spiral . Congratulations, you have made your first 'twig off'!

This step is often called the: 'fold, pinch and twist process.'





You'll see that you now have two bits of leftover wire from the bottom of the twist, separate them so that they're horizontal.

Pic 1 - Grab one bit of wire and fold it approximately 1/3 of the way along, making sure there will be some left over wire (for the trunk).

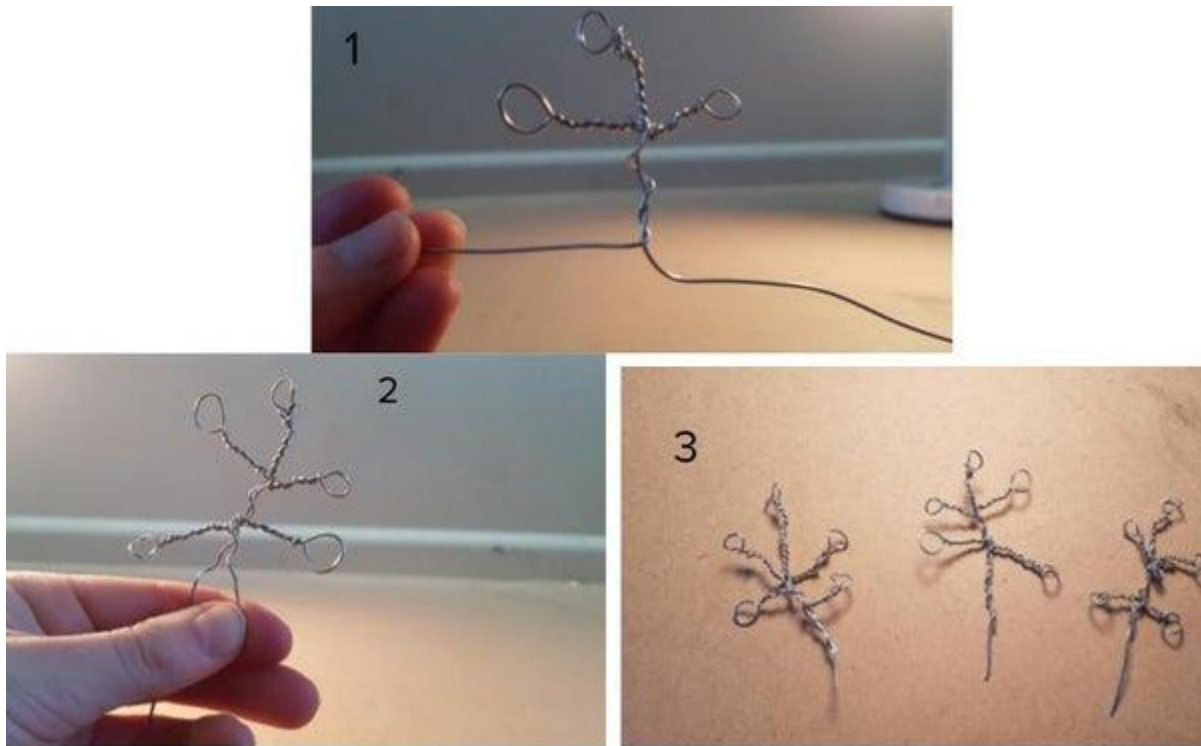
Pic 2 - Pinch it with the pliers at the bottom of the twist and put the twister in the fold like before and twist like a crank (again) so it forms spiraled wire right up to the pliers. Take care, again to make an even spiral.

Repeat this process with the wire on the other side (the longer piece). That makes your other twig off.

Pic 3: You will find two pieces of left over wire now twist those two together (end result Pic 4).

Do this step with the other two small Branch wires. You should now have 3 complete twig offs (Pic 5)

For your medium branches use the same fold pinch and twist process to make a 5 twigs per branch



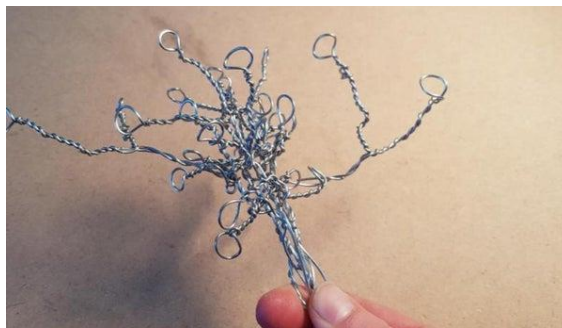
Pic 1: Separate the wire from the bottom of the twist point, choose one piece and do the fold, pinch and twist process, except only twist it to half way.

Pic 2: Fold the leftover piece of wire in half, still leaving some extra, and do the fold, pinch and twist process again. Keep twisting until it reaches original center point (as shown in Pic 3).

Repeat entire process with opposite side. Finally twist the leftover trunk bits together (end result shown in Pic 3).

Repeat process for your other 2 Branch wires. You should end up with 3 completed 2 Branch wires.

To give your creation a sturdy foundation, you need to design a trunk for your tree. Start by gathering all the pieces in your hand holding each branch by the trunk end the trunks.



Grab your 'Extra/Roots' wires and wrap them one at a time around the trunk wires. Leave some leftover trunk wire at the bottom, still visible. Spread out the leftover pieces of wire, these are the roots. Use any extra wire if needed. Alternatively, twist the wire at the bottom of the branches in to on smooth twist, and incorporate the root wires into that twist to form a thicker twist near the bottom. Then gather and twist groups of four or five individual wires to form the roots snaking out from the tree.

Giving Life to Your Tree

Spread the branches and the twigs of your tree out. Play with your design and get your creativity in the game. Every tree is perfectly imperfect. Once you like it's design and balance, find a stone for it to sit on, a vase for it to sit in, or even a flat tile. Arrange the roots to your satisfaction and glue it on. Then glue your beads or stones on the loops. What to use as leaves is limited only by your creativity. I have seen trees with crystals, cabochons, and even gravel. You may need to spread out your branches again and pull off any excess stringy bits of glue. If you want a spooky look, perhaps keep the stringy glue on! Glue some of the beads or stones like fallen leaves on the base if you like. When it is finished, bring it to the next rock meeting and show off your efforts...just remember what the rocks are.

Beyond the Beginning

Once you have mastered a few trees, start changing the shape and the materials used. Mix materials, use two or three colors of wire or different types of leaves. Put the tree in an embroidery hoop to make a wall hanging or a small metal circle to make a necklace. Put little frames or lockets on the leaves to make a family tree, or a class tree. Go to your dollar store or your hobby store and let the creative juices take hold. These trees can be geared to any budget and any taste, again, the only limits are your creativity. Be inspired by your local nursery, a park, or even your own yard. Or invent your own kind of plant. Pictured in the beginning of this article is a heart shaped tree, just to show that creativity has no limits.

At the April Meeting we will be demonstrating this craft, we will bring wire, please bring small jeweler's or needle nose plier. Let us make a tree.

<https://www.instructables.com/Gemstone-Tree/>

<https://www.ritastreasures.com/gemstone-tree-easy-to-follow-diy/>

<https://www.rockngem.com/how-to-make-wire-gem-trees/>

<https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Wire-Tree-Sculpture>

Wire Wrapped Pendants by Natalie Shaw

Supplies Needed for:

- ☞ Rocks, crystals, shells, driftwood, etc.
- ☞ 20 gauge gold wire
- ☞ jewelry and needle nose pliers

I used about 8-10 inches of wire for each pendant, depending on the amount of wire I wanted to play with. Start by making a loop in the center of the wire.

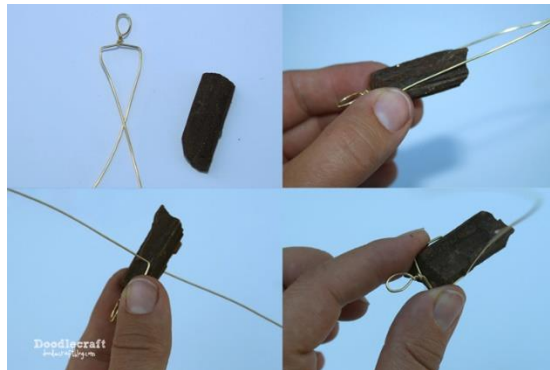
Twist the loop twice.

Place across the top of the rock, mark with a pencil where the edges of the rock are.



Bend the wires with the pliers to fit around the top of the rock (at your pencil marks) Hold the wires on the side of the rock.

Bend the wires at a 90* angle...one going one direction, the other the opposite.



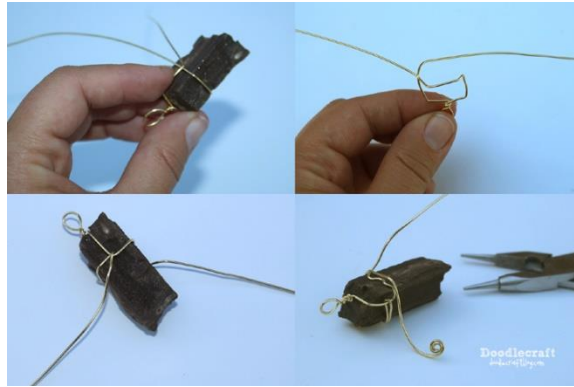
Wrap the wires around the rock and twist them through the wire on the other side.

I pulled the rock out momentarily to interlock the wires.

Then slid the rock back in.

Now pull the wire in the opposite direction. It makes a tight pull here and keeps the rock in place.

The remaining wires can be wrapped around for extra support or swirled for decoration.

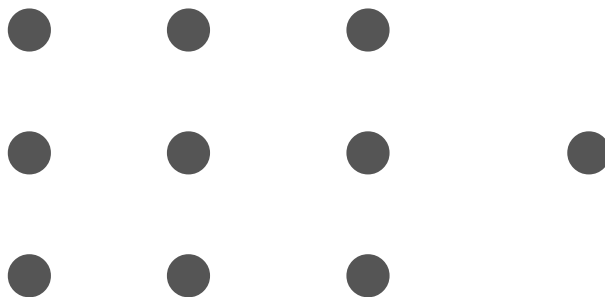


And, trust me, you'll want to make a bunch!

<https://www.doodlecraftblog.com/2015/08/wire-wrapped-pendants-petrified-wood.html>

Editor's Note: This article explains a simple type of wire wrapping. Kelly Plumb uses a slightly different technique with far more refined results which she will demonstrate at our next meeting.

Material Sources: Wire, glue and pliers can be found in any hobby shop, as can beads and small vases. Micheals, Joannes, and Hobby Lobby are all great options. Stones for bases, leaves and pendants can be result of rockhounding, source at landscape suppliers or purchased from online suppliers. Be creative and think outside the box. To help get the creativity floating, here is an exercise in out of the box thinking. Connect all ten dots below with one straight line, the answer will be at the next meeting. Ask Cheryl



PROMOTE OUR CLUB, MAYBE WIN PRETTY PRIZES!

In June, the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies show will be held in Lodi.

**CFMS SHOW AND CONVENTION
LODI GRAPE FESTIVAL GROUNDS,
413 E. LOCKEFORD ST., LODI, CA 95240**

It's always a phenomenal show which tends to move around the state. It is a great venue – and relatively local--and I expect to see a variety of new and familiar vendors.

We at CCM&GS have so many talented lapidary artists, mineral collectors and others who have created incredible cases. Let's show off!

Those who enter a case (or more) get two free tickets to the event!

Now for the good part. We can show our cases there either as competitive cases or noncompetitive ones. I admit I'm partial to winning contests, so I'll be entering a competitive case in hopes of acquiring some flashy new bling, but some others may prefer to take the opportunity to simply showcase what they do. As the world is getting back on track after Covid, this is an excellent opportunity to promote our club within the rock-loving community. Here's how to enter:

1. Go to the Federation page at: <https://cfmsinc.org/> on the right column, scroll down to **Show Forms** and click on it.
2. The left column has forms for **competitive** and **noncompetitive** cases. Click on the one you prefer.
3. For the competitive, go to [AFMS Rules 2018.pdf \(amfed.org\)](#) for information about the divisions and how the judging is done, so you can know how to make your case as attractive as possible to the judges. Confused after you read it? I was, so you can contact Pat LaRue at bplarue@earthlink.net with specific questions.
4. You'll need to determine your Exhibit Division (My rock meal display is "Open A-5 because it is considered a project)
5. If you can't figure out the Exhibit Class for the entry form, leave it blank and let them figure it out.
6. When you reach the line for enter as CFMS or CFMS Supplemental, check CFMS, I have no idea why.
7. If you have a display case, good! Say you'll bring it! Because this show is not sponsored by a club, they are having problems getting enough cases although they do have a few for rent. If you do not have your own case, get in touch with President Mike Hopkins and do it before you submit your application, he may be willing to lend club cases, but he'll probably have to run it past the board. Electricity/lighting? No more than 150 watts per case and bring a 3-prong extension cord.
8. Get an elected CCM&GS officer to sign your application. The April meeting is a good opportunity!
9. Send a copy signed copy of the two-page document to Pat LaRue (her mail address is on the form). Keep a copy for yourself.

10. On June 22, go to Lodi and set up your case so it will be ready for judging on Friday. The details are on the form.
 11. WIN! WIN! WIN!
 12. I'm going to use my two free entry tickets on Sunday to see the show and tear down my case when the show is over at 4 pm.
 13. Bonus points: There's an Arby's in Lodi. I'm a huge fan and may stop by both on Thursday and Sunday. No, that's not the least bit relevant to the show, but if someone wants to build an Arby's in Concord, I will be your very best customer!
 14. Take a photo of your case, and any awards you win, and submit them to the club newsletter!
- **DEADLINE TO ENTER CASES IS JUNE 1. THEY WANT THE PAPERWORK BY SNAIL-MAIL, SO PLAN AHEAD!**

Questions? Get in touch with Pat LaRue (above). I've never done this before and am no expert.

When I spoke to Pat, I was concerned that there would be a pre-judging and I may not make the cut. She said that they plan to take all comers. So, do this to support our club, get some new exposure for your case, and maybe win pretty, shiny, prizes!

Donna Albrecht

Display

February has a great competition between three very accomplished craft persons, Donna Albrecht, Kelly Plumb and Suzanne Garrett. Donna won the Professional division with a Charoite cab, and Shape of the month with a spectacular round Thulite. Kelly won the design with a wire wrapped flame agate. With gold filled wire. Congratulations". This month's shape is the beginner's shape, the oval. All the rest of you club members should give these three some competition.



APRIL



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
27	28	29	30	31	01	02
03	04	05	06	07	08	09 EASTER
10 Club Meeting. Endeavor Hall	11	12	13	14	15 Taxes!!!	16 Rock and Museum Trip to Mariposa
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Other Noteworthy Dates

- ✓ May 8th General Rock Meeting
- ✓ June 1th General Meeting and Club Picnic at the Morgan's
- ✓ June 25th and 26 Federation Show in Lodi

