



Member: South Central Federation of Mineral Societies



Affiliated: American Federation of Mineralogical Societies



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1<sup>st</sup> Place, 2019 SCFMS Mini-Bulletin  
1<sup>st</sup> Place, 2020 SCFMS Mini-Bulletin  
1<sup>st</sup> Place, 2017 AFMS Mini-Bulletin

## October Birthstone, Opal

Don Shurtz, Pleasant Oaks Gem and Mineral Club of Dallas

Opal is one of two October Birthstones, the other being tourmaline. This article is only about opal. As a birthstone, it is not specified if the opal should be a precious opal, a fire opal, or any of the other varieties of opal varieties including common opal. Given a choice, I think most would pick a precious opal. The precious opal has a play of fire in the stone and is normally cut as a cabochon. A good alternative would be a fire opal. The fire opal is named as its color resembles fire. Most fire opals are cut as faceted stones.

Opals are composed of silica (silicon and oxygen), with varying amounts of water. Opals are not a mineral as they do not form in a definitive crystalline structure. They are more properly classified as mineraloids. Opals exhibit conchoidal fracture and have a waxy luster. The Mohs hardness ranges from 5.5 to 6.0. Although not a crystalline structure, at microscopic levels opal is composed of spheroids of silica that are arranged in a hexagonal or cubic lattice structure. It is the distance between the planes of spheroid lattices that cause the different flashes of colors. The light is being diffracted by the grating between the different planes (for grating, think of looking at the light being diffracted and reflected from a CD or DVD). The color of the light is determined by the incident angle of the light and the spacing between the planes of the spheroid structure.



lattice

Precious Opal from Cooper-Pedy, Australia

Of course, not all opals have the play of color. That is reserved for precious opal. Common opal may still be beautiful. Think of the pale blue and the violet opals that are often cut into cabochons. They are absolutely stunning. Then there are fire opals that were previously mentioned. They are translucent and have a color reminiscent of fire. When faceted, the refraction and reflection of light within the cut stone may emerge as flashes of color from the different facets much like a faceted diamond. This makes the stone look even more like a fire.

The feature article in last month's Chips and Chatter featured hyalite, a type of common opal that fluoresces strongly. Many natural opals will fluoresce when illuminated with an ultraviolet (UV) light source. Some fluoresce with a long wavelength UV light source while others require a short wavelength UV light source. One good test for synthetic (man-made) opal is that synthetic opal does not fluoresce.

#### References:

- Opal, Wikimedia Commons, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>
- Opal, Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

#### Picture:

- Picture of Precious Opal from Cooper-Pedy Opal Field, Australia. Picture by James St. John, CC BY 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>>, via Wikimedia Commons

## Shows and Activities – Upcoming Show and Activity Dates

Please note that many shows are being canceled in response to health concerns associated with COVID-19

Check with the show contact to verify the show status

- Oct 2-3, Jacksonville, AR, Central Arkansas G&MS, Jacksonville Community Center, [www.ncgms.org](http://www.ncgms.org)
- Oct 2-3, Fort Worth, TX, Cowtown GM&GC (CERA), 3300 Bryant Irvin Rd, [steve.l.shearin@Imco.com](mailto:steve.l.shearin@Imco.com)
- Oct 8-10, Westwego, LA, G&MS of Louisiana, Alario Center, [show@gmsofla.org](mailto:show@gmsofla.org), <https://www.gmsofla.org>
- Oct 9-10, Temple, TX, Tri-City GMS, Frank Mayborn Civic and Convention Center, [rolston@got.rr.com](mailto:rolston@got.rr.com)
- Oct 22-24, Austin, TX, Austin G&MS, Palmer Events Center, [showchairman@austingemandmineral.org](mailto:showchairman@austingemandmineral.org), [www.agms-tx.org](http://www.agms-tx.org)
- Oct 30-31, Oklahoma City, OK, Oklahoma M&GS, Hendricks County Fairground (NEW LOCATION), [omgs-minerals.org](http://omgs-minerals.org)
- Nov 6-7, Amarillo, TX, Golden Spread GM&TS, Amarillo Civic Center, [facebook.com/Golden Spread-Gem-Mineral-and-Treasure-Society](https://www.facebook.com/Golden-Spread-Gem-Mineral-and-Treasure-Society)
- Nov 6-7, Round Rock, TX, Paleo Society of Austin FOSSIL FEST – CANCELLED
- Nov 6-7, Midland, TX, Midland G&MS, Bush Convention Center (formally Midland Center), [midlandgemandmineral.org/](http://midlandgemandmineral.org/)
- Nov 12-14, Humble, TX, Houston G&MS, Humble Civic Center, [www.hgms.org](http://www.hgms.org)
- **Nov 20-21, Mesquite, TX, Dallas G&MS, Mesquite Convention Center, [dgmscontracts@yahoo.com](mailto:dgmscontracts@yahoo.com)**

#### Ref:

- September-October 2021 SCFMS Newsletter
- Rock & Gem Show Dates, <https://www.rockngem.com/ShowDatesFiles/ShowDatesDisplayAll.php?ShowState=ALL>

## VISIT AN AREA CLUB

[Arlington Gem & Mineral Club](#), meets the 1st Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm, 1408 Gibbins, Arlington, TX  
[Cowtown Gem, Mineral, & Glass Club](#), meets the 2nd Tuesday at 7:00 pm, CERA 3300 Bryant Irvin Rd. Fort Worth  
[Dallas Bead Society](#), meets 1st Saturday of each month at 10:00 am at The Point at CC Young, 4847 W. Lawther Dr., Dallas, TX  
[Dallas Gem & Mineral Society](#), meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7 pm, American Legion, 10205 Plano Rd, Dallas (next to their shop)  
[Dallas Paleontological Society](#), meets 2nd Wed. of each month at 7:00 pm, Brookhaven College, Building H, 3939 Valley View Lane, 75244  
[Fort Worth Gem & Mineral Club](#), meets 4th Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm, 3545 Bryan Avenue, Ft. Worth  
[Oak Cliff Gem & Min Soc.](#), meets the 4th Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm, Unitarian Universalist Church, 3839 W. Keist Blvd, Dallas,  
[Pleasant Oaks Gem & Mineral Club](#), meets the 1st Thur. of each month at 7:30 pm, Garland Women's Activities Bldg., 713 Austin, Garland  
[Wild West Bead Society](#), meets 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6:30, Wild Beads, 2833 Galleria Dr., Arlington, TX

## Trip Report, the SCFMS Convention, September 26 in Lubbock, Texas

Don Shurtz, Pleasant Oaks Gem and Mineral Club of Dallas

The SCFMS Convention was held on September 26, 2021, in conjunction with the Lubbock Gem and Mineral Society show. In addition to the live meeting, the convention was also broadcast on the Internet as a Zoom meeting. The convention activities started with the Editor and Webmasters breakfast. Ling and I attended as I am the SCFMS Website Contest Committee Chair. I do not enter the POGMC website into the contest to avoid any question of favoritism as I select and interact with the judges for the contest. The East Texas G&MS won this year's contest (Margaret Kilanski, webmaster) while the Lubbock G&MS (Walter Beneze, webmaster) finished in second place in a tight contest. These two websites went on to the AFMS website contest where Lubbock G&MS finished third and East Texas G&MS received an honorable mention. In the Editor contest, an early deadline for entries was missed by a lot of editors, including the POGMC editor (Oops, that would be me). Raymond Lynch from the Hot Springs Geology Club won first place as the Editor of the Hot Springs Bulletin in the Large Bulletin Category and as an author won first place in the Adult Author category. Walter Beneze of the Lubbock Gem and Mineral Society won first place as an Editor in the New Editor category and first place as an author in the Written Feature category. The speaker for the Editor and Webmaster breakfast was Mark Nelson, AFMS Bulletin Editor Advisory Committee chair and an award-winning editor. Mark described his personal experience as an Editor. He entered the California Federation's contest where his first attempt resulted in some low scores but specific comments on how to improve. By incorporating the comments, he made dramatic improvements in the Bulletin and went on to win the Small Bulletin category. Mark also discussed how to prepare a winning bulletin. He also talked about the rather under-utilized category of Special Publications and the various topics that can fit into this category.

The SCFMS Convention was held in the afternoon. I often describe this as a rather boring meeting with a lot of "the report is in the meeting packet" responses followed by a mandatory motion and approval of each report, and there are a lot of reports! This year's convention had its fair share of "the report is in the packet" responses, but there was some rather interesting discussion of the proposed Constitution and By-Law changes. One change was to increase the term for certain officers (including the president and executive vice president) from one to two years. Another proposed change was to remove the cost of club membership in the SCFMS from the By-Laws and make it a topic for the Executive Committee to set the dues each year. This change was enacted so that the SCFMS could pass along some savings for the insurance program. A few years ago, the insurance carrier was changed, but the SCFMS could not pass on the savings as the amount for the dues could not be modified without a By-Laws change. Still another change was to allow the SCFMS to conduct some official business by electronic means (emails) rather than forcing the use of a slower postal service. Finally, like last year there was not a quorum for the meeting, so new officers could not be elected. The elections will be held by mail and email and the results will be published in the SCFMS newsletter.

The conclusion of the SCFMS Convention is the Awards Banquet. The guest speaker at the Banquet was Helen Serras-Herman. Helen is a noted author including numerous articles in the Rock and Gem magazine. Helen spoke about "Must-See U.S. Gemstone Mines." Helen has also published articles with the same name and topic in the first three Rock and Gem "Glorious Gemstones" special publications that are available for free from the Rock and Gem website. Even though I had read the articles, the talk by Helen made the articles come to life. Helen and her husband, Andy, had visited all the mines in the article and the presentation. Her presentation, for me, was the highlight of the Convention. Following the address by Helen, the SCFMS Scholarship Honoree and the two scholarship winners were announced. Unfortunately, they were unable to attend the Convention and Awards Banquet. The Honoree and the two graduate students are from Louisiana State University (LSU) in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Dinner followed the awards, and then the Convention ended. Stay tuned for next year when the SCFMS Convention will be in October 2022 in New Orleans and hosted by the Gem and Mineral Society of Louisiana.

Although not a part of the SCFMS Convention, the official Rollin' Rock Club (RRC) meets at the show, generally on Sunday morning. This year's RRC meeting was fun, as are most RRC meetings. Auctions at this year's meeting netted \$155.00 for the AFMS Scholarship Fund and \$179.00 for the Lubbock G&MS's scholarship fund. The RRC's Treasure Chest is auctioned at every RRC meeting with the proceeds going directly to the AFMS scholarship fund. The funds from the auction of donated rocks, minerals, and other hobby-related items go to a charity selected immediately before the auction. Some charities include the AFMS Endowment Fund, the SCFMS Endowment Fund, club scholarships, etc.



## Bench Tips from Brad Smith

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### LAYOUT TOOLS

Dimensions on some features of a design can be fluid while others must be accurate for the design to work. When precision on a piece is important, good layout techniques are essential.

These are the tools that I rely upon to get holes in the right place, to achieve correct angles, and to cut pieces the correct length.



I like crisp sharp lines to follow, so I often coat surfaces with a dark marker and scribe my layout lines onto the metal. A square makes quick work of checking right angles or marking where to cut, and the thin center punch helps me mark a place to drill holes exactly where I want them.

Finally, a good set of dividers is probably my favorite layout tool. They let me quickly mark a strip for cutting, swing an arc, and divide a line or curve into as many equal segments as I need. I keep at least one set of dividers in every toolbox.

### INVENTORY RECORD

In an ideal world, each of us who sells their jewelry has a good record with photos of all pieces in our inventory. We use it for insurance purposes, to record the cost to produce, to note where the item was sent out on consignment, and maybe to store descriptive text for marketing. Eventually, we note in the record when the piece was sold and for how much.

It's nice to also have good pictures of each piece, but sometimes we don't have time for a full-on photo session. In situations like this, it's worth doing a quick group shot with the help of a phone, a camera, a scanner, or even a color copier. The quality is at least sufficient for an accurate identification in case a piece is lost.

### Work Smarter & Be More Productive With Brad's "How-To" Jewelry Books



### From the Desk of the President

Judy Beck, AFMS President 2020 – 2021

Hi, my Rock Friends! This is officially my last newsletter article as President. The year sure did go by fast! When I was in Girl Scouts, we used to sing this song: Make new friends but keep the old. One is silver and the other gold! Here's to all of my silver and gold friends! Thanks so much for guiding me, supporting me, and being my friend throughout this year.

As I write this, I'm preparing to have a house full of family (all vaccinated) for the Labor Day weekend. Bright and early Tuesday morning, Larry and I will be hopping in our rolling roost to head to the Midwest Convention hosted by the Toledo Gem and Rockhound Club. We are very excited to attend the meetings and see their show. I'm a Michigan girl and we are going to visit some family and then travel to the Keweenaw Peninsula in the UP (Upper Peninsula in Michiganese ;) and Copper Country. I've never been that far west to tour the area because I always get sidetracked before getting there. But this time we have reservations on the shore of Lake Superior on that elusive peninsula!

After our arrival home, we'll work the week and then head to Lubbock for the South Central Convention hosted by the Lubbock Gem & Mineral Society.

I can't wait to see the treasures that we will see at the show! September is going to be a good month! I'll have to write one more article to tell you about all of our adventures!

I'm excited about the American Federation and its future. This past year we saw big strides in improving our digital presence by the updating of our website. The committee continues to meet and we are excited about being able to bring this to our members in the near future. We also have looked at how we can support and better highlight the wonderful Junior Rockhound Program that we have. This committee worked hard at our convention to highlight the Junior Rockhound Program and has also been looking at the Juniors' page on the website. I encourage all of you to look at where you can volunteer at the club, regional, or national level.

We need good people like you! Again, thank you for allowing me to serve you this year as President of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies. From the bottom of my heart, I want you to know that it has been a privilege and an honor to represent you.

Hoping to see you on a field trip soon,-and may all your finds be keepers!



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Ling Shurtz, POGMC President

At our October meeting, nominations and elections for officers for next year are due. If you are interested in an elected position, please let a club officer know. The new officers will be installed at the November meeting. October 8 – 10 is the International Gem and Jewelry Show (IGEM). Set up will be Wednesday, October 6, 2021. See you at the next meeting.

## CLUB OFFICERS FOR 2021

President: Ling Shurtz  
1st VP, Programs: Carolyn Grady  
2nd VP, Field Trips: Open  
Secretary: Cheryl Ogletree  
Treasurer and Editor: Don Shurtz  
E-mail: don.shurtz@gmail.com,  
L.SHURTZ@gmail.com

## MEETING MINUTES

August 5, 2021

POGMC President Ling Shurtz called the September 2, 2021 club meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

We recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Quorum: We have a quorum.

Sunshine Report: Nothing to report.

Visitors: We had three visitors, Nancy Elliot, Ryan Miller, and Ana Miller (daughter of Ryan).

Minutes: We reviewed the minutes of the August meetings as printed in the September 2021 Chips and Chatter. Joe Vulk made a motion to accept the minutes. Carolyn Grady seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: There was no Treasurer's report. Don was ill from food poisoning and unable to complete the report

Old Business:

- The Dallas IGEM show is scheduled for October 8 - 10. Set up will be Wednesday, October 6.

New Business:

- Danny Baker advises that IGEM tickets should be available. Additionally, we have requested permission to issue email tickets – more to follow.

- David Dobson's next rock sale is September 10 – 12 at 1409 Oak Hill Ln, Murphy, TX 75094
- Area shows and events
  - Sep 11-12, Siloam Springs AR, NW Arkansas G&MS, Siloam Springs Community Building, delanec3@earthlink.net
  - Sep 25-26, Lubbock, TX, Lubbock G&MS, Lubbock Memorial Civic Center, www.lubbockgemandmineral.org and is hosting the SCFMS CONVENTION, Registration for convention Editor/Webmaster Breakfast and/or Awards Banquet (includes 2-day show entry) at: [https://www.lubbockgemandmineral.org/content.aspx?page\\_id=4002&club\\_id=360346&item\\_id=1455874](https://www.lubbockgemandmineral.org/content.aspx?page_id=4002&club_id=360346&item_id=1455874)

Break:

Presentation – Hands-On Mineral Identification and First Cabochon.

Ling adjourned the meeting at 9:00 pm.  
Cheryl Ogletree, Secretary

## PRESENTATION REVIEW

Don Shurtz, Pleasant Oaks Gem and Mineral Club of Dallas

At the September meeting, we completed our hands-on first cabochon project. All the cabochons were nicely cut and polished. These first cabochons were cut from synthetic materials. They were easy to work with and took a great polish. However, all the techniques to cut and polish them were the same as using a harder stone such as jasper.

## OCTOBER MEETING

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, October 7, 2021, at the Garland Activities Building starting at 7:30. We will finally get the opportunity to see the video about Uluru/Ayers Rock – Sacred Nature of Rocks.

## VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

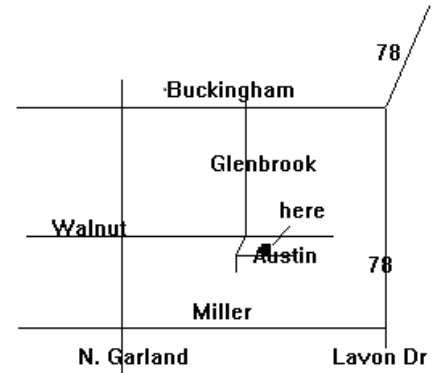
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**PLEASANT OAKS GEM and MINERAL CLUB of Dallas**



**Meetings**  
 First Thursday of each month, 7:30 PM  
 Garland Women’s Activities Building  
 713 Austin St., Garland, TX  
 (Northeast corner of Austin & Glenbrook)

**Membership**  
 Single Adult: \$16.50,  
 Junior: \$5.00, Family: \$27.50  
 (Plus badge fee for new members)



**PURPOSE:** The Pleasant Oaks Gem and Mineral Club of Dallas is organized for charitable and educational purposes to promote interest in the various earth sciences, particularly those hobbies dealing with the art of cutting and polishing gemstones, the science of gems, minerals and metal crafts, as well as their related fields. Pleasant Oaks Gem and Mineral Club of Dallas is a Section 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization

**CHIPS AND CHATTER**  
 Pleasant Oaks Gem & Mineral Club  
 PO Box 831934  
 Richardson, TX 75083-1934

To

**VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME**

**Our next meeting will be Thursday, October 7, 2021, starting at 7:30 PM**  
**Our presentation will be the video “Uluru/Ayers Rock – Sacred Nature of Rocks”**

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