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1st Place, 2022 SCFMS Mini-Bulletin
1st Place, 2022 AFMS Mini-Bulletin

October Birthstones –Opal and Tourmaline

Don Shurtz, Pleasant Oaks Gem and Mineral Club of Dallas

If you were born in September, you have a choice of two beautiful birthstones. Opal is the first choice. Opal is not a mineral but rather a mineraloid. It does not have a definite crystalline structure – it is more closely related to glass, but do not let that scare you away. Like both quartz (a mineral) and glass, it is composed of Silicon Dioxide (SiO₂). It is not quite as hard as quartz on the Mohs hardness Scale (7.0); it comes in at a Mohs hardness of 5.5 to 6 – you should be able to scratch opal with a piece of quartz. Opal is generally broken down into 3 varieties, Common Opal (includes blue opal), Fire Opal, and Precious Opal. Most everyone thinks that Fire Opal is the one with the flashes of color throughout the stone, but they are wrong. Fire Opal is a transparent to translucent opal that comes in the colors of flame, typically orange, yellow-orange, and red-orange. The opal with the flashes of color throughout the stone is Precious Opal. Precious Opal is composed of microscopic spheres of opal that are stacked in parallel



planes. When the spacing between the planes is about half the wavelength of the light illuminating the stone, diffraction of the light can occur producing the flashes of color that we see. The uniformity of the sphere diameters and the regular stacking are essential for high-quality opal.



Tourmaline is the second option for October birthstones. Tourmaline is not a mineral, but rather a family of minerals. The most common variety of the tourmaline family that is used as gemstones is Elbaite. Within the Variety Elbaite, several species are typical in jewelry including Rubellite (red to pinkish-red), Indicolite (light blue to bluish green), Verdelite (also called the Emerald variety – green), and Achroite (colorless). Sometimes the species can appear in the same crystal – the classic example is Watermelon Tourmaline which has red and green bands. Another variety of Tourmaline that has become popular in recent years is Schorl, a brownish-black to black variety. Crystal clusters of Schorl are popular, and more recently, faceted Schorl stones have proven popular. Obviously, the black Schorl is not translucent or transparent, but the flashes of light reflecting back from the surface of a dead-black background of a faceted Schorl stone are interesting.

Reference:

Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

Pictures:

Precious Opal, Picture by Don Shurtz of specimen on display at the Perot Museum of Nature and Science

Tourmaline, Picture by Don Shurtz of specimen on display at the Perot Museum of Nature and Science

This short article from the September, 2023 Hot Spring (Arkansas) Bulletin shows the effects of photographing a specimen with natural, SW UV, LW UV, and a combined SW and LW UV light source. I found it to be very illuminating!

FLUORESCENTS FROM MIKE HOWARD

By J. Michael Howard

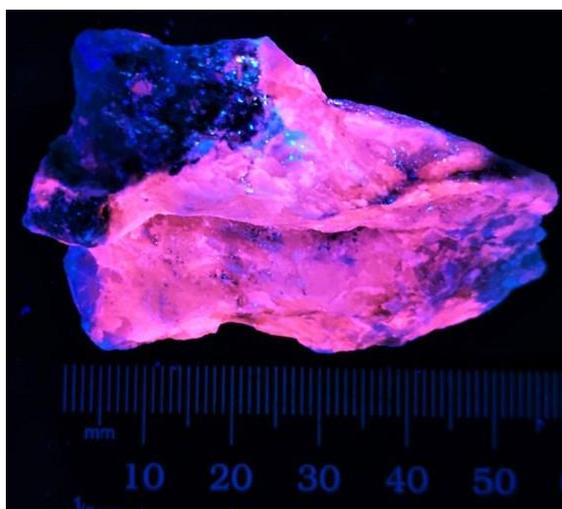
From the September 2023 Hot Springs Geology Club Bulletin

Arrived today from Germany! It was quite a wait, but worth it, I think.

This specimen contains light-colored sphalerite in a calcite marble matrix. The calcite contains enough Mn⁺² to give it a decent fluorescence. This example is from the Hasselhojden Limestone Quarry, now abandoned, Grythyttan, Hallefors, Orobro County, Sweden. Mindat.org has some pictures of the old tower-type limestone kiln, along with a picture of the mine dumps.

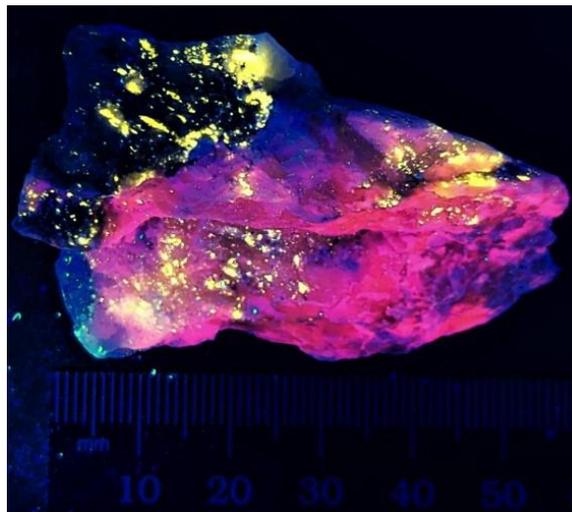
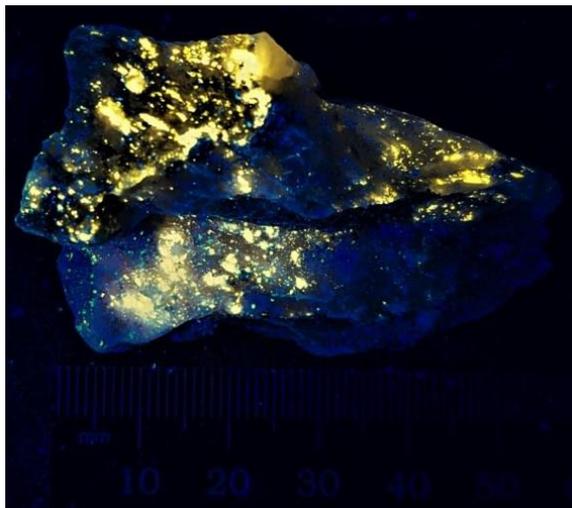
The rock just has the general appearance of any whitish crystalline marble (Picture 1). Picture 2 shows the calcite displaying a nice pinkish-red fluorescence in SW light. Note that the sphalerite is not fluorescent in SW 254nm. Picture 3 shows the sphalerite with a nice golden yellow fluorescence in LW 365nm and little response from the calcite. Finally, picture 4 shows the same specimen in combined SW and LW. This is the first picture I have taken using both lamps and am pleased with the result!

Enjoy the pictures!



1.) Sphalerite in calcite marble matrix, Orobro Co., Sweden, in natural light at left

2.) In SW UV 254 nm light at right



3.) Sphalerite in calcite marble matrix, Orobro Co., Sweden, in LW UV 365 nm at left

4.) In combined SW and LW UV light at right.

Specimens and images by J. Michael Howard.

Chips and Chatter

See the Chips and Chatter online for color!

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Pleasant Oaks Gem and Mineral Club of Dallas, TX

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Venomous Snakes and Safety

Ellery Borow, AFMS Safety Chair,
From the October 2023 AFMS Newsletter

The good news is that relatively few snakes are venomous. The bad news is that some are indeed venomous. The good news is that there are ways to be safe when encountering venomous snakes. The bad news is that it is sometimes difficult to tell which are venomous and which are not.



To sort out the issues of how to be safe around snakes please see the guidelines following this report. But first, a bit of background information will be helpful to know.

When collecting in a new area it is common to become familiar with hazards to be found there – plants to avoid, biting and stinging insects to mind, weather to watch, and snakes to respect. Considering snakes, it is probably safe to say that most rock, mineral, and fossil collectors are not herpetologists, with their knowledge of snake habitats and lifestyles. Snakes generally want to be left alone. Some, such as rattlesnakes, give us fair warning that we are getting a little too close for comfort by rattling their tails.

There are numerous excellent snake guidebooks and websites, with their detailed information and pictures to aid with venomous and non-venomous snake identification. The problem with snake identification is that there are a number of look-a-likes, making it sometimes difficult to identify venomous snakes from the non-venomous kinds. Getting a good close look at a snake and making comparisons with the identification guidelines is ill-advised considering that venom could be involved. Compounding the identification difficulty is that snakes can and do cross over with the resulting offspring being not quite like the images in the identification guides.

One popular activity when visiting a new collecting area is to visit local rock shops to learn not just about area minerals but also about collecting cautions. The trouble with snakes is in the naming and locating of the named snake in the identification guides state lines. With environmental changes, snakes are slowly finding their way into new areas. So, a mineral collector may come across a snake that isn't supposed to be found in the area. In addition, for one reason or another, sometimes people move/release snakes in areas they are not known to inhabit. In snake identification, collectors should be aware such things occur.

As a side note, any snake identification guide may not reflect the current state of classification. Modern DNA technology is causing some shifting in how snakes are grouped, so take some naming and identification with a grain of salt in older guidebooks.

That said, venom is still venom.

If one is bitten by a snake, drive to a medical facility offering an anti-venom. The efficacy of anti-venom continues to improve.

Please do not be bashful with utilizing the services of a medical facility if a snake bite occurs on a field trip.

Most snakes bite to secure food. They use just enough venom to serve the need. When agitated or attacked a snake is likely to use its full venom capability when biting. Give snakes a wide clearance. Children, by being smaller than adults, maybe more seriously affected by a venomous snakebite. With their natural curiosity and lack of full understanding of a snake's potential dangers, children need to be carefully supervised.

There are several common wisdoms when dealing with snake bites in the field – such as packing the area of the bite in ice. Unfortunately, they are for the most part not particularly useful and some may actually complicate matters. **The best advice to treat snakebite is to get to a medical facility quickly.** Facilities in areas with venomous snakes will likely have anti-venom in their pharmacies.

Among the common wisdoms and advice are both to keep the victim immobilized, and yet get to a medical facility as soon as possible. While those two ideas appear to be opposites (immobilize and transport), they are the two that are advisable to follow. The solution for a snakebite is both to keep the patient's heart from racing (and spreading venom) and to have a collecting partner aid the patient in not having to exert themselves as the partner drives the patient to the medical facility.

The snakebite guidelines:

- Make an effort to go collecting with other people, preferably people who can also drive a motor vehicle.
- Mind the activity of children when snakes are likely in the area.
- Become familiar with the location of the area's medical facilities.
- Know the nature and habits of the venomous snakes in the collecting area.
- Wear snakebite clothing - chaps, gaiters, and sturdy footwear.
- Keep one's hands and fingers in sight – snakes (as well as scorpions) may be hidden underneath objects.

- Some snakes rattle their tails — please heed those warnings of tail movement and sound.
- Venomous snakes may not look exactly like the pictures in the books. Allow for variations. And the best



snakebite prevention advice – give all snakes wide clearance in every instance. Leave them alone. In some instances and areas, they may be protected species

The study of snakes is an engaging activity. On a rock, mineral, and fossil collecting trip the main focus is usually on the collecting, not the snake identification. Please keep clear of all snakes, even the non-venomous ones. If one is really curious about a snake, feel free to take a picture of it (from a safe distance) for identification at a later date.

Your safety matters, and so does that of the snake. We can learn to share the world together... there is enough room for all.

Shows and Activities – Upcoming Show and Activity Dates

Check with the show contact to verify the show status

October 2023

- 13 – 15 October, Westwego, LA, G&MS of Louisiana
- 14 – 15 October, Temple, TX, Tri-City G&MS, Frank W. Mayborn Civic and Convention Center, lrolston@hotmail.com
- 14 – 15 October, Fort Worth, TX, CERA (Cowtown G&MS), 3300 Bryant Irving Rd, steve.l.shearin@lmco.com
- 20 – 22 October, Austin, TX, Austin G&MS, Palmer Events Center, www.agms0tx.org
- 27 – 29 October, Oklahoma City, OK, Oklahoma G&MS, Oklahoma State Fair Park, omgs-minerals.org

November 2023

- November 4-5, Amarillo, TX, Golden Spread GM&TS, Amarillo Civic Center, www.facebook.com/golderspreadgemmineraltreasuresociety
- November 4-5, Round Rock, TX, Paleontological Society of Austin, Oldsetters Association, 3300 E. Palm Valley Blvd., www.facebook.com/austinpaleo
- November 10-12, Humble, TX, Houston G&MS, Humble Civic Center, <https://hgms.org/annual-show>
- **November 18-19, Mesquite, TX, Dallas G&MS, Mesquite Convention Center, www.dallasgemandmineral.org**

December 2023

- December 9-10, Leesville, LA, Deridder G&MS, West La Forestry Auditorium Bldg., www.rockngemswla.com

Ref: Rock & Gem Show Dates, <https://www.rockngem.com/ShowDatesFiles/ShowDatesDisplayAll.php?ShowState=ALL>

Ref: May-June 2023 SCFMS Newsletter

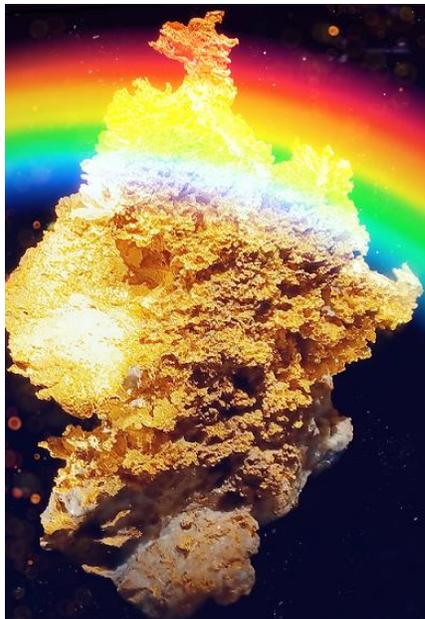
Special thanks to Del Glasner, the SCFMS District 8 Vice President for helpful information about SCFMS Club Shows.



Editor's Corner – Random photos from the Perot Museum of Nature and Science



Shattuckite



Dragon's Lair Gold
Some camera malfunction
caused the rainbow



Tanzanite

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 the 2nd Wed. of each month at 7:00 pm, Brookhaven College, Building H, 3939 Valley View Lane,
- [Fort Worth Gem & Mineral Club](#), meets the 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 7:15 PM, Bradfield Recreation Center, 1146 Castle Dr, Garland,
- [Wild West Bead Society](#), meets 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm, Wild Beads, 1124 S. Bowen Road, Arlington, TX

Chips and Chatter

See the Chips and Chatter online for color!

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Pleasant Oaks Gem and Mineral Club of Dallas, TX

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Visit us: www.pogmc.org Like us on Facebook

OFFICERS FOR 2023

President: Joe Vulk
1st VP, Programs: Carolyn Grady
2nd VP, Field Trips: Julie Wilson
Secretary: Amy Vulk
Treasurer: Ling Shurtz
Editor: Don Shurtz
Contact us by e-mail: don.shurtz@gmail.com or
L.SHURTZ@gmail.com

Minutes of the August 3 Meeting

POGMC President Joe Vulk called the 9/7/2023 club meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Snack time: Until late-comers arrive. Thanks to Vulks, Carole, and Hatt for providing the snacks.

Pledge of Allegiance: Members recited the pledge.

Quorum: We have a quorum

Visitors: Johnny and Choice Rhodes. They joined the Club.

Minutes:

Minutes of the August meeting were published in the September Chips and Chatter. Carolyn made a motion to accept the Minutes as presented. Ling seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of members present.

Treasurers Report:

Ling presented the Treasurer's Report. Brenda made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. Amy seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of members present.

Old Business:

- Discussion on raffle items being identified before the drawing resulted in continuing as before (without identifying raffle items).
- On 20-Aug., the Club's Executive Board approved to reimburse Don \$85 for paying for our domain/website.

No one from our Club attended the Arlington Gem and Mineral Club open house.

New Business:

- Carolyn and Julie volunteered to serve on the nominating committee for the Oct. election of new officers.
- Called for a delegate for the 13-15 October SCFMS Convention - Carolyn volunteered to attend via Zoom.

- Julie reported that she and Warner will again set up their booth during the State Fair in the Women's Building.
- Don reported that he was contacted by honorary Club member Diane Brownley soliciting our presence at the Dallas Arboretum Geology Day, on 11 Nov. Don, Amy, and Hatt volunteered to set up an information table at the arboretum.

Presentation:

Carolyn provided a video of the volcanoes of Hawaii.

Raffle: Due to time limitations, Don auctioned off an amethyst cluster from the Club collection. \$20 was raised.

Snack for next meeting: Carole and Hatt.

Joe adjourned the meeting at 8:32 p.m.

President's Message

Thanks to our VP (Programming), Carolyn Grady for selecting and showing the Volcanoes of Hawaii video at our last meeting. I find it so interesting that the tectonic plate has continued to slide over a more stable volcanic hot spot for millions of years, producing a long chain of islands.

I am pleased to welcome our newest member, young Choice Rhode. Choice will be bringing his dad, Johnny, along to our gatherings.

I hope you can make it to our October meeting when you will be voting for the Club officers for our next term. Joe Vulk

October Meeting

The October 5 Meeting will start at 7:15 at the Bradfield Recreation Center, 1146 Castle Drive, Garland, TX. For the presentation, we will continue the video from the Great Courses series, Volcanoes of Hawaii. See you there.

VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

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PLEASANT OAKS GEM and MINERAL CLUB of DALLAS



Meetings

First Thursday of each month. The next meeting will be April 6 at the Bradfield Recreation Center, 1146 Castle Drive, Garland, TX 75040

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 not-for-profit organization

CHIPS AND CHATTER

Pleasant Oaks Gem & Mineral Club
c/o 4004 Dublin Rd.
Allen, TX 75002-6526

To

VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

Our next meeting will be Thursday, October 5, 2023

Our presentation will be a continuation of the video about Hawaii and Volcanos

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