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The Eyes of Africa

By Don Shurtz, Pleasant Oaks Gem and Mineral Club



Photograph of the Eyes of Africa on display at the Perot Museum of Nature and Science
Photo by Don Shurtz

The Eyes of Africa (continued)

The Eyes of Africa is a specimen of Alien Eye Fluorite on display at the Perot Museum of Nature and Science. The Alien Eye Fluorites are extremely rare. They have been found only in one pocket of a mine in the Erongo region of Namibia, Africa. The Erongo region was formed by a massive volcano that erupted 130 million years ago. The entire region is known for the minerals that formed there, including granite, feldspar, quartz, schorl (black tourmaline), and especially fluorite. The fluorites from the Erongo region are known for their deep color saturation and sharply defined color zones within the crystal. Each pocket tends to produce a unique color combination, making specimens from that pocket unique from any other fluorites in the area. The Alien Eye fluorites have a bright lime-colored “eye” center that seems to glow, but in fact, it is just the way the light in the crystal is refracted and reflected. The center is surrounded by a dark black box, which in turn is surrounded by a dark green cube. The effect looks alien, or like an alien’s eye. The story that I have heard, and have often repeated, is that the Alien Eye Fluorites were named after ET – the Extra Terrestrial. Google AI does not confirm that story, but when I look at the Alien Eye pairs, I can see ET staring back at me! And most people agree!

The miner who found, extracted, and eventually sold the Eyes of Africa was Herold Gariseb. Herold and his team extracted all the Alien Eye Fluorites from the pocket. Most were sold as soon as they were extracted from the mine, but Herold recognized that the Eyes of Africa would be the defining piece. He decided to hold on to it until the price for Alien Eye Fluorites had increased. He wanted to wait until all the original Alien Eye Fluorites had been sold; that was when collectors started buying from other collectors, leading to a significant price increase. He needed a safe place to store it, but his home was regularly broken into. The safest place he had was the trunk of his white Mercedes. There are conflicting stories about how long the piece remained in the trunk of his car. The values range from several months to years. The accepted story when it was first displayed at the Perot Museum was EIGHT YEARS. The math works for that value; the specimen was found in 2007, spent 2 years in cleaning, and was first displayed in 2017.

Two American collectors, Mark Kielbaso and Jurgen Tron, were among those interested in finding the elusive Mercedes. They knew about the white Mercedes and heard rumors that it was nearby. They again followed the local roads and the rumors, eventually finding the Mercedes parked in front of Herold’s home. Herold showed them the specimen, and there was no doubt from Mark and Jurgen that they had to acquire it. They were able to negotiate an acceptable price. To transport the 65 lb. specimen to the United States, they decided to wrap the piece in diapers to protect it during shipment. In that region of the world, packages of diapers are broken down into individual diapers for sale at retail one at a time. It took 400 diapers to properly protect the Eyes of Africa in a 30-gallon plastic drum, which was in turn packed inside a 55-gallon steel drum. It took 3 months for the steel drum to be shipped to the United States on an ocean freighter.

Mark and Jurgen wanted to turn a profit when they sold the Eyes of Africa, but they did not want it to end up in someone’s private collection where it would never be seen again. They contacted Daniel Trinchillo of Fine Minerals International to represent the specimen. Daniel contacted Lyda Hill, a client and major mineral collector with significant ties to the Perot Museum of Nature and Science; the mineral hall at the Perot Museum is named after her, the Lyda Hill Gem and Mineral Hall. Most minerals and gems in the Lyda Hill Gem and Mineral Hall are on a three-year loan to the Perot Museum. This allows about a third of the items on display to be new each year. The Eyes of Africa went on display on July 12, 2017 – exactly 10 years after it was discovered in Namibia. The specimen has been on display continuously for almost 9 years. I hope you get a chance to come and see it. It is the first thing you see as you enter the hall. Walk up and read the story on the display monitor. Stand about 3 feet away, slightly to the left of the centerline, and tilt your head about 40-45 degrees to the left. Look at the Alien Eye Fluorites that are now right in front of you. Do you see ET looking back at you? I do.

If you come to the Lyda Hill Gem and Mineral Hall to see the Eyes of Africa, don’t stop there. There are over 30 cases of mineral specimens, with each case generally holding several specimens. The specimens range in size from thumbnail size to gigantic. Don’t forget to read the tablets at the bottom of the display for more information. And don’t forget the remaining Halls in the Museum.

Reference: Text by Don Shurtz using placards at the Perot Museum and assistance from Google AI

FEDERATION NEWS

Safety Matters, Stop Me If You've Heard This One. . .

Ellery Borow, AFMS Safety Chair, From the May 2026 AFMS Newsletter

Yes, that is the old refrain from a dear uncle before he once again recited one of his favorite jokes. All the folks within earshot had indeed heard the joke for who knows how many times.

Joke-telling aside, repetition does have a place in our activities. Think of the elders in ancient times who recited stories again and again, because oral traditions were the only means of keeping a record of events in their shared history. Repetition of important stories cemented those stories into the hearts and minds of the people. Repetition helped people remember important information.

Repetition also has a modern equivalent, especially in matters of safety. In one company's weekly toolbox safety meetings, messages to wear safety glasses, hearing protection, steel-toed safety shoes, and to utilize gloves to protect from scrapes, scratches, and cuts had to be repeated and repeated and repeated. The reasons for the repetition were clear – workers come and go, managers come and go, foremen come and go. The other reason for repetition is the same in the rock hobby – sometimes passions and enthusiasm get in ahead of safety concerns, so reminders are helpful. All this is similar to what happens in our clubs – new members join, new officers are elected, and safety committee chairs change. In addition, the passions in our hobby are strong.

Repetition also plays a part in a club's safety history. Where has a club collected? In what activities has it engaged? What safety issues have been found in its workshop? All such areas may have had matters of safety arise. If there have been such issues, we certainly would not want them to repeat. If matters of safety arise, having a collected wisdom and a history of safety records can help prevent future issues.

Thankfully, we do not have to rely solely on utilizing only oral traditions. A club can record

written safety incidents (perhaps in file folders or computer files). There may also be photographic records, or even video records of safety matters in a club's history. All those records would be specific to one's club and club history. Hopefully, all those records would be passed from one club safety chair to the next.



To broaden the club's general safety knowledge, additional accident prevention and safety information is available through a myriad of sources. Hobby magazines occasionally offer safety articles. Safety tips appear in many club newsletters (a great reason to share newsletters among clubs). Clubs share safety programs with other clubs. There are informal communications among many people in the hobby with the effort to keep people safe. We also have a plethora of safety information from manufacturers, insurance companies, and internet websites. In matters of medical safety, information is available in many places.

Instead of an elder orally repeating the history of a group, we have, at our finger tips, a wealth of safety "history" available to us in our clubs. A key to using that information is to keep it fresh in our minds by repetition. Keep updated on medical aid ideas, keep up to date on workshop safety, keep updated on hand tool, glove, safety glasses, and hearing protection because a club's safety matters.

Oh, and that dear uncle's retelling of his favorite joke? Everyone had heard it before, but no one stopped him from telling it again... and everyone smiled.

Please be safe and do whatever you do safely. Your safety matters.

Shows and Activities – Upcoming Show and Activity Dates

Check with show contact to verify show status

June 27-28, Tyler, TX, East Texas G&MS, Tyler Rose Garden Center, https://www.etgms.org/annual_show_-_redesign

June 12-14, Dallas, TX, International Gem and Jewelry Show, Market Hall, <https://www.intergem.com>

August 8-9, Baton Rouge, LA, Baton Rouge G&MS, Lamar Dixon Expo Center

August 15-16, Bossier City, LA, ArkLaTex G&MS, Bossier Civic Center, <https://larockclub.com/show>

Word Find Puzzle: The Eyes of Africa

Word Find Direction: Find all of the words in the Word List on the left in the Word Find Puzzle on the right. The words can be arranged horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. The word can be forward or backward, up or down, or in any direction on the diagonal. Your first hint is that the first two words in the Word List are on the top line of the Word Puzzle. A second hint can be found on page 5. The solution can also be found on page 5.

Word List
ALIEN
EYE
FLUORITE
NAMIBIA
ERONGO
POCKET
HEROLD
GREEN
BLACK
TRUNK
MARK
JURGEN
DANIEL
LYDA
HILL
PEROT

Word Find Puzzle									
A	L	I	E	N	M	E	Y	E	Q
H	Y	T	S	A	V	R	W	T	X
E	D	E	R	M	Z	O	Q	I	S
R	A	K	N	I	V	N	S	R	X
O	L	C	E	B	Z	G	T	U	J
L	L	O	E	I	L	O	Q	U	S
D	I	P	R	A	R	A	R	L	V
S	H	X	G	E	Z	G	C	F	Q
S	V	W	P	X	E	Z	Q	K	S
V	T	R	U	N	K	W	X	Z	Q
S	V	D	A	N	I	E	L	W	X

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 7:00 pm, UNT Health Center, 3500 Camp Bowie, Blvd,

Carl E. Everett Education and Administration Bldg, Room 255, Ft. Worth. Free parking off Clifton Street, Lot #6, 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 Monday of each month at 6:00 pm, Knights of Columbus Hall, 3722 Cavalier Dr., Garland,

[Wild West Bead Society](#), meets 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm, Wild Beads, 1124 S. Bowen Road, Arlington, TX

OFFICERS FOR 2025 – 2026

President: Joe Vulk
 1st VP, Programs: Amy Vulk
 2nd VP, Field Trips: Julie Wilson
 Secretary: Johnny Rhodes
 Treasurer: Ling Shurtz
 Editor: Don Shurtz

Contact us by email: don.shurtz@gmail.com

Minutes of the March 2, 2026 Meeting

This was our annual Cinco de Mayo potluck dinner meeting. About the only thing that resembled a normal meeting was the raffle at the end. There was no business meeting; no minutes were required.

Presentation Review

Our May meeting was our Cinco de Mayo celebration and Potluck Dinner. The highlights of the potluck dinner were EVERYTHING. The taco meat was very good. The refried beans were a big hit. They came with a crunchy taco shell or your choice of three to five different types of soft tacos or tortillas. There

were also a variety of cheese types. The Cinco de Mayo decorated cake was a nice touch and tasted superb. The cookies and giant muffins were excellent. It was really hard to go wrong. My vote is we do this again next year.

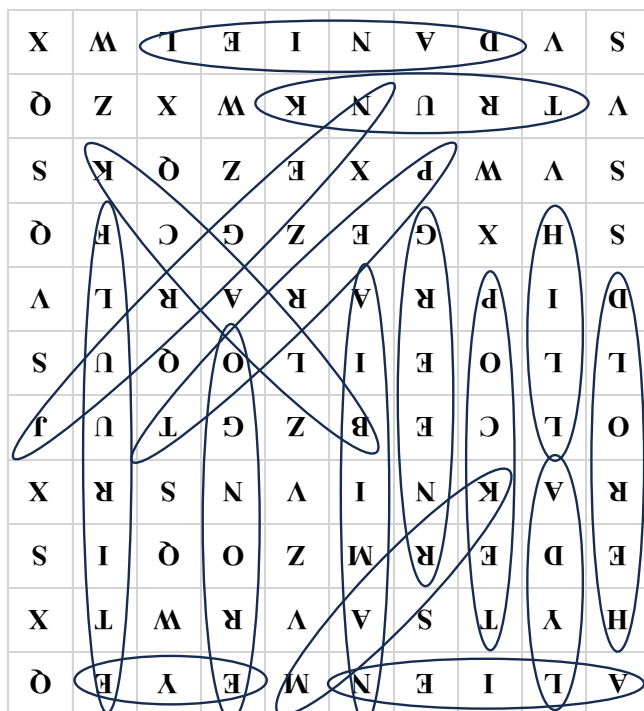
Our Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be Monday, June 1st, 2026. We will meet at the Knights of Columbus, Council 6402 Hall, 3722 Cavalier Drive, Garland, TX. The meeting will start at 6:00 and end by 8:00. The Presentation for the meeting will be a surprise.

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Word Find Puzzle Hint 2: The letters Q, S, V, W, X, and Z are not in any of the words in the Word List. They are, however, used as the only filler letters in the Word Find Puzzle. Crossing them out of the Word Find Puzzle may help you find the words from the Word List.

Word Find Puzzle Solution



PLEASANT OAKS GEM and MINERAL CLUB of DALLAS



Meetings

First Thursday of each month. Please check website, www.pogmc.org, for updates.

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 that involve the art of cutting and polishing gemstones, the science of gems, minerals, and metal crafts, and 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: Monday, June 1, 2026, at 6:00 PM. We will meet at the Knights of Columbus, Council 6402 Hall, 3722 Cavalier Drive, Garland, TX 75042

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