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Affiliated: American Federation of Mineralogical Societies



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1st Place, 2015 SCFMS Mini-Bulletin

## RHODOCHROSITE

Don Shurtz, Pleasant Oaks Gem and Mineral Club of Dallas

Think of Colorado and minerals and you probably think about silver. One of the minerals that is sometimes associated with silver mining is rhodochrosite. In the early days of the Sweet Home Mine (opened 1873) near Alma, CO the miners would find red crystals. They did not know what the red crystal was, but they knew it was not silver based. The miners were allowed to bring out the red crystals and many used them for payment in salons and inns. Eventually the material made its way back east where it was identified as rhodochrosite. A lot of the red crystals ended up in the slag heaps outside the mine. A rumor has it that many years ago the streets of Alma were made with gravel from the residue of the Sweet Home Mine; and a lot of small crystals of rhodochrosite were found in the streets.

The Sweet Home Mine was shut down in 1967 due to the paucity of silver in the ore, but it was re-opened in 1991 as a rhodochrosite mine with financial investment and working agreements with the Collector's Edge. It has produced some spectacular specimens. The Alma King, discovered in 1992, is the largest known rhodochrosite crystal and is displayed at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Also on



Rhodochrosite from Sweet Home Mine



Rhodochrosite from Wutong Mine

display at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science is a pocket that was extracted from the Sweet Home Mine and reconstructed in the Museum. You walk through the pocket to enter the mineral exhibit. The pocket will be as close as you can get as the Sweet Home Mine as it was again shut down at the end of 2004. The area has been environmentally restored and only one building remains.

A similar story can be told of the Wutong Mine in China. It was opened in 1958 as a silver, zinc, and lead mine. Around 2000 there were rumors of rhodochrosite being found at the mine. In 2006 the Collector's Edge formulated an agreement with the mine owners to start collecting the rhodochrosite specimens. In 2010 they opened a pocket with several large pieces including the world's largest rhodochrosite specimen which became known as the Emperor of China. The Empress of China

specimen was collected from the same Emperor Pocket. It is my understanding that the Emperor and Empress specimens are displayed in the China National Museum. Several other very nice specimens came out of the same pocket and were nicknamed the Princesses

of China or the Wutong Princesses. One of these specimens made it to the Perot Museum of Nature and Science. The Wutong Mine was closed in the summer of 2011 and remains closed.

Rhodochrosite is composed of manganese with a carbonate radical,  $MnCO_3$ . It has a Mohs hardness from 3.5 to 4.0. Because it is so soft it is not frequently fashioned into jewelry, but some cabochons and faceted stones have been produced. Rhodochrosite is found in many locations including the United States (Colorado), China, Bulgaria, Romainia, South Africa, and Argentina. Stalagmites and stalagmites composed of rhodochrosite come from Argentina. As you can see from the picture, when cut as a cross section they produce a slab that is nothing short of amazing.



Rhodochrosite Slab from Argentina

Rhodochrosite from South Africa, like the specimens from Colorado exhibit transparent crystals. Some of the

specimens look like they could be from the Sweet Home Mine, but one huge difference is the cost – the Sweet Home Mine crystals cost significantly more for similar size pieces, primarily because specimens are actively being mined in South Africa but the Sweet Home Mine is closed.



Rhodochrosite from South Africa

#### References:

- Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>
- The Collector's Edge, <https://collectorsedge.com/>

#### Pictures:

- Rhodochrosite from Sweet Home Mine
- Rhodochrosite from Wutong Mine
- Rhodochrosite slab from Argentina
- Rhodochrosite from South Africa
  - All pictures by Don Shurtz of specimens displayed at the Perot Museum of Nature and Science

Editor's comments: I took the pictures used in this article with a cell phone and, although the camera is good, it is not great. Focus seems to be one of my issues as evident by some of the pictures with this article. For some really great photos and more information on the Sweet Home Mine and the Wutong Mine, I would encourage you to look at "The Collector's Edge" website. The link to the Sweet Home mine is <https://collectorsedge.com/pages/sweet-home-mine-park-county-colorado-usa>. The link to the Wutong Mine is <https://collectorsedge.com/pages/the-wutong-rhodochrosite-mine-guangxi-zhuang-autonomous-region-china>. Both of these links will show some amazing photographs. I would have loved to include some of the photographs, but as you know, copyright laws must be observed.

### Visit an Area Club

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

## Show Calendar – Upcoming Show Dates

Aug 12 – 13, San Antonio, TX, Peppers Gems, Crystal Mystic, 4703 Shavonao Oak, ste. 100, [jspeck2@att.net](mailto:jspeck2@att.net)  
 Aug 12 – 13, Gonzales, LA, Baton Rouge G&MS, Lamar Dixon Expos Center – Trademart Bldg, [www.brgemandmineral.org](http://www.brgemandmineral.org)  
 Aug 19 – 20, Bossier City, LA, ARKLATEX G&MS, Bossier Civic Center, [www.larockclub.com](http://www.larockclub.com)  
 Aug 26 – 27, Jasper, TX, Pine County G&MS, The Event Center, [www.pinecountry-gms.org](http://www.pinecountry-gms.org)

Oct 27 – 29, Dallas, TX, International Gem and Jewelry Show, Market Hall, <https://www.intergem.com/>

Nov 10 – 12, Humble, TX, Houston G&MS and SCFMS Convention, Humble Civic Center

Nov 18 – 19, Mesquite, TX, Dallas G&MS, Rodeo Center Exhibit Hall, [www.dallsgemandmineral.org](http://www.dallsgemandmineral.org), [case53d@yahoo.com](mailto:case53d@yahoo.com)

- Ref:
- July - August 2017 SCFMS Newsletter
  - Rock & Gem Show Calendar, <http://www.rockngem.com/show-dates-display/?ShowState=ALL>

### Word Across Puzzle

Don Shurtz, Pleasant Oaks Gem and Mineral Club of Dallas

	<b>B</b>		<b>L</b>		<b>A</b>			<b>A</b>						
		<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>						<b>R</b>				<b>A</b>	
					<b>R</b>		<b>M</b>				<b>I</b>	<b>A</b>		
<b>C</b>		<b>L</b>	<b>O</b>					<b>O</b>						
			<b>C</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>				
				<b>F</b>				<b>T</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>D</b>				
	<b>S</b>		<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>				<b>O</b>	<b>M</b>		<b>M</b>			<b>E</b>
				<b>C</b>				<b>B</b>		<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>		<b>E</b>	
					<b>M</b>				<b>S</b>					
		<b>C</b>		<b>Y</b>					<b>A</b>	<b>L</b>				
				<b>C</b>				<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>					
			<b>W</b>					<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>		<b>M</b>			<b>E</b>
	<b>A</b>		<b>G</b>					<b>T</b>	<b>I</b>		<b>A</b>			

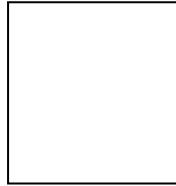
Fill in the words in the horizontal rows. All the words in the puzzle can be found in the article on pages 1 and 2. The first and last letter of each row has been provided as a clue. Spaces in lines with multiple words have been omitted. One row has been completed as a clue. Most rows are locations or names. All row words are entered left to right – no tricks here! The only vertical column without a nonsense word is the heavier outlined column. When complete, the heavier outlined column will give you the answer to this puzzle.

The answer can be found on page 4.



## Editor's Corner

The box below shows all the pictures I received in my request to send me the last picture of a rock that you took. Kind of empty isn't it!



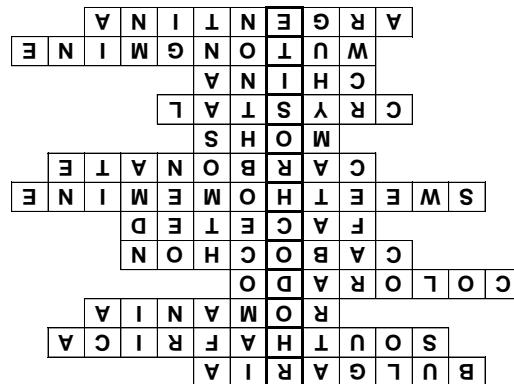
## Federation News

Don Shurtz, Pleasant Oaks Gem and Mineral Club of Dallas

The American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS) Convention is over. The convention was June 9 - 11. Thus, if the convention is over, we have lots of new AFMS news, right? The winners in the AFMS Editor and Author Contest and Web Site contests were announced at the convention. However, unless you were at the convention, the winners remain unknown. Our SCFMS Federation BEAC (thanks to Mark Nelson, the AFMS Bulletin Editor Advisor) did receive notification of SCFMS winners, but the info is being withheld until our SCFMS Convention. The SCFMS Web Contest Coordinator (that would be me!) does not have a clue how our clubs did. Oh well! The next AFMS Newsletter will be in September, so maybe there will be some information about the convention and contests then.

The SCFMS Convention is November 10 – 12 in Humble, TX. The hot topics this year are proposed changes to the Constitution, By-Laws, and Operating Procedures. Leading the pack is a proposed Sexual Harassment Policy. It is not that the policy is controversial; it is that situations have occurred that make such a policy a necessity. Seems you cannot get away from sexual harassment even in your hobby. Another change that may cause some ripples is a proposed change to the SCFMS fiscal year (FY). The FY has generally been aligned with the change in officers, but for our dealings with the U.S. Government, it would be better if the FY were aligned with the calendar year. I would encourage you to look at the SCFMS Newsletters and the SCFMS Web Site. If you have any inputs on any of the convention topics, please get with our President, Ling Shurtz so that she can bring up your topics or points at the convention.

## Word Across Puzzle Answer



Answer is this column

## President's Message

Ling Shurtz, POGMC President

Our August meeting will start at 7:30. We will be doing an EMU Egg Jewelry Box project. Materials will be available at the meeting. IGEM is just around the corner, October 27 to 29. Start making you plans now.

## Club Officers for 2017

President: Ling Shurtz  
1st VP, Programs: Carolyn Grady  
2<sup>nd</sup> VP, Field Trips: Open  
Secretary: Lee Elms  
Treasurer: Del Grady  
Editor: Don Shurtz  
E-mail: don.shurtz@gmail.com,  
L.SHURTZ@gmail.com

## Minutes of the July 6<sup>th</sup> 2017 Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 by the President, Ling Shurtz

Pledge: Don led the Pledge of Allegiance

Blessing: Cheryl gave a prayer to bless the food

We started with a Very Successful Pot Luck Salad Bar. After a lot of talk and a lot of salad, we realized it was time to start the presentation. As we had not conducted any business, we had a very short business meeting

Sunshine Report: Patti Mitchell is still in the hospital.

Visitors: There were no visitors

Minutes: We discussed the minutes of the June 2017 meeting as printed in the July 2017. Don made a motion to accept the minutes as published. Lee seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Del read the Treasurer's Report. Warner made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. Hat seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Old Business:

- New name tags should be available for the August meeting

New Business:

- We decided to make Emu Egg Jewelry Boxes (no kaleidoscopes) starting in August
- Local upcoming shows were reviewed

Break: As we had just finished our salads, we decided not to have a break.

Presentation: We watched the DVD "The Nature of Earth, the Hawaiian Islands and Yellowstone Park." The DVD was part of "The Great Courses" series. It was interesting to learn how the Hawaiian Islands formed from a volcanic hot spot under the oceanic crust caused the differing islands to form. Plate tectonics caused the plate to move over the hot spot so that periodically new islands would form. A volcanic hot spot under the continental plates is responsible for Yellowstone Park. The current geologic conditions are indicating that a super volcano could erupt at any time. By tracking the movement of the continental plate, older super-volcano eruptions can be identified.

After the presentation, there was a general movement towards the exits, so the raffle was postponed until next meeting.

## Meetings

Our August 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting will start at 7:30 PM at the Garland Women's Activities Building. The project for this month, and it will likely continue to the September meeting, will be making an Emu Egg Jewelry Box.

The September 7<sup>th</sup> meeting will start at 7:30 PM at the Garland Women's Activities Building.

## SHOW and TELL

**Bring: (1) Bring a pyrite or similar specimen. (2) Bring an August Birthstone, peridot or sardonyx**

**VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME**

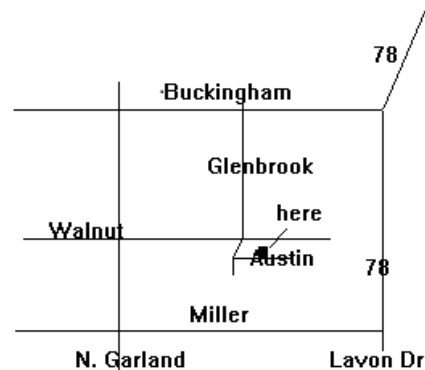
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**PLEASANT OAKS GEM and MINERAL CLUB of Dallas**



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.

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

To:

**VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME**

**Next Meeting: August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017**

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