



## Christmas Calcite

Fiction, by Jessica Shurtz - Pleasant Oaks Gem and Mineral Club  
From the December 1999 Chips and Chatter

The gang and I loaded all the stuff into the car and finally started out to the caves where we'd be looking for calcite specimens, and there was also a photographer who would be coming along to photograph some of the formations. There were 6 or 7 of us going, but I considered myself lucky to be going after all. My folks had wanted me back home but instead I convinced them that I was busy going to my 'boyfriend's' Christmas dinner. The truth was I didn't have a boyfriend, but did my parents really need to know that? So instead I headed off to the caverns, with high hopes.

The trip was going for a week and it would be really cold. We drove for 15 hours and when we got there, the weather was absolutely awful. There was at least 2 ft of snow, and it was still snowing. There was no way that we'd get much done if weather was like that the whole time. But we checked in the hotel and enjoyed a good night's rest.

The next morning dawned clear and we headed off as soon as we could. We hurried to get down so that we would have time. When we finally crawled through the last tunnel I clicked on my flashlight and gasped in wonder. All around us... it was beyond words. We spent a good few hours collecting and the photographer getting shots and then we ate lunch. Then it was back to work. We found some really intriguing specimens, and Joe found probably the best one I'd ever seen. It glowed radiantly, like a fire that burned within. It was probably a fluorescent calcite. But if it wasn't, then I had no clue. A couple hours later, the photographer clicked on the radio and turned to the weather station. We listened

intently and we heard probably the worst news - a huge blizzard had started again. We packed up the stuff in record time and crawled back. Being the smallest, I had gone first to check things out. But after I was halfway there I already could feel the old dread that I knew we were trapped in. Silently everyone was thinking the same thing and when the entrance was blocked, I almost broke down in tears. But Shawn, the photographer, told me to keep my hopes up and not worry. It was hard, because I knew that today was Christmas Day, and that tomorrow we should be leaving to go home. Actually

tonight, but now that wasn't happening. All we could do was keep together and hope for the best.

The middle of the night got so cold I turned bluish. Everyone did. I was worried someone would catch hypothermia. I never guessed that I would be the one to fall to that fate...

At about 3 am the next morning I was so incredibly cold and sleepy... Immediately I told myself not to fall asleep. In spite, I dozed off and could faintly hear voices yelling at me... something shaking me... light flooding in my eyes...

Then blackness. When I finally awoke I was in the hospital and I had a huge pile of gifts beside me. Carol was in the room and told me what happened. But the nurse came in and seeing me awake succeeded in ushering her out of the room to my protest. I stared at the pile of gifts and the one I saw first was the radiant little calcite... the perfect Christmas present that I had missed.

Picture by Kora27, Wikimedia, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>, licensed under [Creative Commons Attribution - Share Alike 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/). The picture was not published in the 1999 version.



## Editor's Christmas and New Year's Carol

By Don, Jessica, and Kathy Shurtz, From the January 1999 Chips and Chatter

**'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house  
Not a creature was stirring except for the mouse.**

**Pointing and clicking it's way 'cross the screen,  
An article for the newsletter soon to be seen.**

**A story 'bout agates or maybe 'bout calcite  
Or fossils, or diamonds, or even anhydrite.**

*When all of a sudden I heard a loud clatter  
I jumped out of my chair to see what's the matter.*

*A grinding and rattling noise came from afar,  
Then suddenly rocks spilled all over my car.*

*My tumbler had split, or so it did seem.  
I had but one option, so I let out a scream.*

*Then what to my wondering eyes should appear?  
But a tiny old man who shouted "Have no fear!"*

*He had emeralds and diamonds and lots of gold,  
All that my hands and my pockets could hold.*

*And newsletter stories from his bag did he pull;  
I'll take them all; this editor's no fool.*

**Then with a start I awoke from my dream  
And found I was staring at a blank screen.**

**No article would be finished upon this dark night;  
The end of the newsletter was still not in sight.**

**With nothing to do and nothing to hope,  
I said out loud "I feel like a dope".**

**But not to worry, have a Good Christmas day.  
The newsletter deadline's a full week away.**

**Then from behind me a voice in my ear  
Said "Give up for now, have a Happy New Year."**

Editor's Note: This Poem won first place in the 2000 SCFMS Editor and Author Contest, Poetry Category!

## Shows and Activities – Upcoming Show and Activity Dates

Dec 7 – 9, Irving TX, Rock Sale, David Dobson, The Hyatt Place, 5455 Green Park Drive, [rock@rocktrading.com](mailto:rock@rocktrading.com)

Dec 9 – 10, Leesville, LA, DeRidder G&MS show, West LA Forestry Fairground

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

Jan 20 -21, Fredericksburg, TX, Fredericksburg Rockhounds, Pioneer Pavilion, Lady Bird Johnson Park, [www.fredericksburgrockhounds.org/](http://www.fredericksburgrockhounds.org/)

Jan 26 – 27, Tyler, TX, East Texas G&MS show, Tyler Rose Garden Center, [www.etgms.com/](http://www.etgms.com/)

Feb 17, Llano, TX, Friends of the Llano Red Top Jail, Llano County Community Center, [prospectingtexas.com](http://prospectingtexas.com)

Feb 24 – 25, Plainview, TX, Hi-Plains G&MS, Ollie Liner Center, [bobcat22@suddenlink.net](mailto:bobcat22@suddenlink.net)

### Don't Forget:

Quartzite – Jan 1 through Feb 28 – numerous shows

Tucson – Jan 19 through Feb 12. Tucson G&MS (main show) is Feb 8 - 11

### Ref:

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

## Safety Matters – Field Trip Follower

By Ellery Barrow, AFMS Safety Chair, from the November 2017 AFMS Newsletter



Most likely everyone knows about a field trip, mine master, dig leader. But, what about a field trip follower? You know -follower, the last one in line, the person who helps the stragglers and others not so quick to get to the mine.

The story: Some few folks know I am a hiker and a person who can run up a mountain and take nary a deep breath. A group was going up a local mountain and, probably because of my hiking background, invited me along. This was a mixed group of various ages and abilities, with few having hiking experience. As I'd been up the mountain many a time, I was sort of the guide/leader of the excursion.

While still in the parking lot at the base of several of the young bucks and buck-etts decided to go on up ahead. I had no difficulty or concerns about that because the trail was very well marked, and next to impossible to go astray. This was a church group mind you.

So, I appointed myself the field trip follower. Much of the group had gone on ahead and I sort of stayed with the last fellow in line. I did not let on that I was going slow simply to match his pace. He looked enthused about the hike but I had some reservations about his abilities.

The climb was modestly steep along several stretches of the trail. Perhaps 1/2 way up, with the others well ahead of us, the fellow again stopped to rest. He casually mentioned that he had forgotten to bring his heart meds. That was the first moment in the hike when I thought I was going to be the one to need heart meds for myself. Instead of slapping my forehead and enquiring of the fellow, "What were you thinking?" I kept my poker face, kept calm, and tried to maintain my composure. I assured him that I too liked frequent rest stops. I posed the

question of turning back and his comment was as expected, he was going on, no matter what. Hmmm, well, that was the second time I thought I might need heart meds.

Okay, all right, we pressed on. We 'aided' one another with frequent stops for rest and conversation. I found many reasons to stop, talk and admire the beauty of the trail and undergrowth. Perhaps 3/4 of the way up some of the young bucks and buck-etts passed us as they headed down. The fellow and I did make it to the top, enjoyed the view, and soon headed back down - all the while taking almost as many rest breaks as we did on the way up.

Returning to the parking lot to join the picnic, things appeared to return to normal ish. I'm not sure my heart had relaxed yet.

That trip occurred years ago, in the pre-cell phone era. From that day onward I often became the self-appointed follower. A self-appointed follower when hiking, field tripping, jogging, ice climbing, biking, kayaking, cross-country skiing--whatever.

Does your club's field trip, mine master, dig leader also have a follower? Might be something to consider. Sometimes at the top of a mountain or mine folks are so busy they may not take note that a person did not show up. Even in this day and age, in the wild and woolies of the mountains, cell phones can be problematic. Besides, someone might be hurt enough so as to be unable to use one to call for help.

There are a great many ways of keeping members safe, please consider taking advantage of ail of them. Even being a follower is good. Your safety matters.



### Editor's Corner

Don Shurtz, Pleasant Oaks Gem and Mineral Club of Dallas

Hope you enjoyed the "Blast From the Past" with the "Night Before Christmas" and the "Christmas Calcite" features from 1999. Jessie, Kathy, and I had a great time putting the "Editors Christmas and New Year" poem together. Jessie and Kathy were both quite helpful putting the Chips and Chatter together back then; editing and creating articles, games, and poetry to fill out the newsletter, then helping to fold and stamp it to get it mailed out.

### 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,

## 2018 SCFMS Convention Activities Report

Don Shurtz, Pleasant Oaks Gem and Mineral Club of Dallas

The 2018 South Central Federation of Mineral Societies (SCFMS) Convention, hosted by the Houston Gem and Mineral Society, was held in Humble, TX on Saturday, November 11, 2017. . The breakfast and evening awards banquet had been scheduled for the Golden Coral, but a visit by a Houston club member two days prior the scheduled Breakfast and Awards Banquet found the Golden Coral closed and under construct (remodeling) – the club had not been informed of the cancelation of their events. With a rapid change of venue back to the Humble Convention Center with some room reorganization and a catering company rapidly located, the day started fortunately with the Breakfast with the Editors, Authors, and Webmasters as scheduled. The guest speaker at the Breakfast was Nathalie Brandes who gave a talk titled “Mining in the Ancient World.” Her talk was fascinating. The results of the Editor and Author contest had been previous announce, but there were plaques and certificates to be handed out. Pleasant Oaks G&MC receive many of the plaques and certificates ! After the Breakfast there was time for the show – shopping and silent auctions were the order of the day.

Just after noon the Convention started – its venue had also been changed to the Convention Center but neither the early start nor the change of venue disrupted the attendance. The meeting, as per usual, was a lot of boredom with a few minutes of excitement. After the welcoming activities (HGMS welcome, introductions, prayer, and pledge of allegiance), there was a lot of “reports are in the show packet”, “reports were distributed at the meeting”, and “no reports”. However, when we got to the budget committee report, it got a bit exiting. Discussions were held on two areas: (1) should District Vice Presidents receive travel expenses [as proposed in the budget]; and (2) should there be in increase in the travel allowance for those attending the AFMS Convention and for those attending the SCFMS Convention? Ultimately it was decided to allow travel expenses for the District VPs, to increase the travel allowance for AFMS Convention travel to \$1,500.00, and the subject of increased travel for SCFMS Convention died a quite death. It probably does not seem all the exciting to you, but as the SCFMS Treasurer I now need to worry where the extra \$2000.00 is going to come from. Another area of interest, and of a minor degree of excitement, was to change the SCFMS Fiscal Year from 1 November through 31 October to 1 January through 31 December. This change will greatly facilitate our dealings with the IRS. The final area of excitement (sort of) was the nomination and election of SCFMS officers for 2018. Congratulations to the new SCFMS Officers: Roger Burford as President, Jerrold Simpson as Executive VP, Don Shurtz as Treasurer, Steve Hilliard as District 1 VP, Mike Lang as District 2 VP, Chip Burnette as District 4 VP, Michael Zinc as District 5 VP, Betty Gunther as District 6 VP, and Raymond Lynch as District 7 VP. There was no nomination for Secretary at the Convention. Since the convention, Liz Burford has been nominated for the Secretary position; a vote of the directors will be conducted to confirm Liz as Secretary.

**After the rather long convention, it was back to the show for a little more looking, a little buying, and more silent auction.** It was also time for a little resting. Then it was time for the Awards Banquet. The guest speaker was again Nathalie Brandes, this time giving a talk titled “There Once Was a Goat Named Kare: Over a Millennium of Mining at Falu Gruve, Sweden”. This was another great presentation, talking about copper mining in Sweden from ancient history until today. The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the AFMS Scholarship Honoree for the SCFMS, Dr Barbara Dutrow, PhD, from LSU. She nominated Elizabeth Levy and Shoshauna Farnsworth-Pinkerton, both graduate students at LSU as the two SCFMS Scholarships recipients.

### December Meeting - Dinner



Our Christmass Dinner will be at Spring Creek BBQ in Richardson starting at 7:00 PM. Please not the start time is 30 minutes earlier than normal. There will not be a gift exchange, but we will have a nice door prize. To get to Spring Creek BBQ, from US-75 north or south take the Belt Line – Main Street exit. If you are coming from the south, stay on the service road through the light at Main Street, it will be on your right. If your are coming from the north, keep left to the U-Turn lane, go through the U-Turn and look for Spring Creek BBQ on the right. Come out and enjoy a night of good BBQ, friendship, and lots of talk, talk, and talk. Come on out even if you don’t want a dinner – just join us for the fun.



## President's Message

Ling Shurtz, POGMC President

We were going to have a Christmas Party at the GWAB on December 7, but Garland decide to have their Christmas Tree Lighting party the same evening. Parking will be next to impossible at the GWAB, so we will have a Christmas Dinner with NO GIFT EXCHANGE at Spring Creek BBQ in Richardson starting at 7:00. Spring Creek BBQ is just north of Main Street (next to the Chase Bank) on the US-75 Service Road

IGEM Show is over, but stand-by – IGEM will be back for a repeat show from January 12 -14. Set up will likely be on Wednesday, January 10. The April IGEM will be April 20 – 22.

## Club Officers for 2018

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

## Minutes of the October 5<sup>th</sup> 2017 Meeting

Ling called the meeting to order at 7:35pm.

The Pledge to the flag was led Ling.

Quorum: We had a quorum present

**Sunshine Report:** Nothing to report (Yeah!)

**Visitors:** None

**Minutes:** We discussed the Minutes of the October meeting as printed in the November 2017 Chips and Chatter. Carolyn made a motion to accept the minutes. Hatt seconded the motion. The motion passed.

**Treasurer's Report:** Del Grady gave the Treasurer's Report. Cheryl made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. Carolyn seconded the motion. The motion passed.

**Old Business:**

- IGEM we had a good show. Next one is January

**New Business:**

- The officers for 2018 were installed, Ling as President, Carolyn as 1<sup>st</sup> VP, David as 2<sup>nd</sup> VP, Del as Treasurer, Lee as Secretary, Don as Editor

- We discussed participation in the Dallas Regional Science and Engineering Fair. Del made a motion to not participate in 2018. Butch seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- We discussed participation in the Brookhaven STEM Fair in February 2018. Don made a motion to participate in the fair. Cheryl seconded the motion. The motion passed
- The December meeting plans were discussed. We decided to have a pot-luck dinner (club will provide BBQ) and a hobby related gift exchange (\$20.00 maximum value). We will start early at 7:00 PM
- We discussed upcoming shows.
- Other upcoming shows and events were discussed

**Break and Project:** The Emu Egg project (jewelry box) was completed.

**Raffle:** We held the door-prize raffle

**Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Compiled from notes by Don Shurtz

## Meeting

Our December 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting conflicts with the Garland Christmas on the Square and Tree Lighting Ceremony. Parking in the downtown area of Garland will be extremely difficult if not impossible. So despite our vote, we are changing back to a Christmas Dinner at Spring Creek BBQ (with NO GIFT EXCHANGE) in Richardson starting at 7:00. Spring Creek BBQ is just north of Main Street on North Central Expressway. If you are coming from the south, exit US-75 at the Main Street exit, go through the light at Main Street and look for Spring Creek BBQ on the right. If you are coming from the north, Exit at Main Street, stay left and take the U-Turn to North Central Expressway, then look for Spring Creek BBQ on the right.

**VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME**

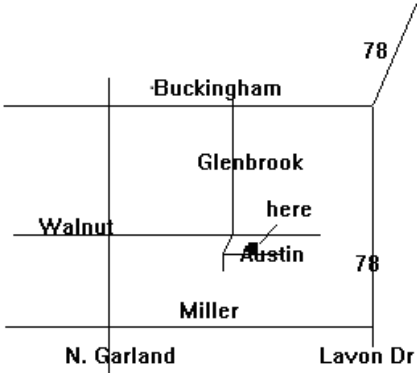
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**PLEASANT OAKS GEM and MINERAL CLUB of Dallas**



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: December 7, 2017, 7:00 PM at Spring Creek BBQ in Richardson**

**Features**

- Christmas Calcite..... 1
- Editor’s Christmas and New Year’s Carol ..... 2
- December Meeting – Dinner ..... 4

**Federation Information**

- 2018 SCFMS Convention Report..... 4
- Safety Matters – Field Trip Followers..... 3

**Monthly Columns**

- Club Information ..... 1, 4, 5, 6
- Editor’s Corner ..... 3
- Minutes of the October 2017 Meeting..... 5
- President’s Message ..... 5

**Notices**

- Meeting Info ..... 4, 5, 6
- Shows and Activities ..... 2
- Visit an Area Club ..... 3