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March 2025
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1st Place, 2022 SCFMS Mini-Bulletin
1st Place, 2022 AFMS Mini-Bulletin

Birthstones for March

Don Shurtz, Pleasant Oaks Gem and Mineral Club

The Birthstones for March are typically Aquamarine and Bloodstone. The American Gem Society and the Geological Institute of America (GIA), the standard for birthstones in the United States, recognize Aquamarine and Bloodstone as the official birthstones for March. However, other countries and cultures have their own birthstone lists, and there are even other birthstone lists for the United States. In his 1913 book, *The Curious Lore of Precious Stones*, Dr. George Frederick Kunz proposed a list of stones found in the United States as an American Birthstone List. Dr. Kunz. Despite his ties with Tiffany and Company, the American Birthstone List never became popular. His birthstone for March was Californite.



Aquamarine, photo by Don Shurtz

Californite, also known as California jade, is a massive rock that contains primarily vesuvianite. It is found in Butte County, California. There is also a Native American Birthstone list. The Native American birthstones are based on a lunar calendar. For March 1 – 10, the birthstone would be Moonstone, and for March 11 – 31, the birthstone would be clear Quartz.



Bloodstone, wikimedia.com, public domain



Californite, Wikimedia.com,

Many people in the United States (and worldwide) are firm believers in astrological signs. The astrological signs Pisces and Aries overlap in March – the birthstone associated with Pisces is Amethyst, and with Aries is Bloodstone.



Moonstone, wikimedia.com



Amethyst, wikipedia.com

Many cultures have their own birthstones. The Arabic nations recognize Bloodstone as the March birthstone. The Hebrew cultures recognize both Jasper and Bloodstone as March birthstones. Hindi, Italian, and Russian cultures recognize Jasper as the March birthstone.



Quartz, wikipedia.com

(continued on page 2)



Jade, wikimedia.com

Polish and Roman cultures recognize Bloodstone as the March Birthstone. Tibetan cultures recognize Jade as the March Birthstone. The Chinese culture does not have birthstones for the month but for the year. 2025 is the Year of the Snake. The birthstone associated with the Year of the Snake is Aquamarine.



Jasper slices, wikimedia.com

As you can see, there are many different birthstones for March – you just need to pick the list with the stone you want. If you don't find the stone you want, you only need to publish your own list to match your fancy.

Reference: Shurtz, Don, Birthstones, an Exposé and History, prepared for Perot Museum of Nature and Science volunteers, April 17, 2016. Copy available by request to don.shurtz@gmail.com

Shows and Activities – Upcoming Show and Activity Dates

Check the show contact to verify the show status

March 2025

March 1-2, Big Spring Prospectors Club, Howard County Fair Barn, Big Spring, TX www.facebook.com/bigspringprospectorsclub

March 15-16, Central Texas Gem and Mineral Society, Taylor County Expo Center, Display Bldg, Abilene, TX, www.facebook.com/p/Central-Texas-Gem-and-Mineral-Society-100082479451581/

April 2025

April 5-6, Southwest G&MS, Wonderland of Americas Mall, San Antonio, TX, www.swgms.org

April 18-20, Chihuahuan Desert G&M Club, Alpine Civic Center, Alpine, TX, www.facebook.com/chihuahuan-desert-gem-mineral-club

May 2025

May 4-5, Waco G&M Club, Lee Lockwood Library and Museum, www.facebook.com/wacogemandmineralclub

May 24-25, Fort Worth G&M Club, May 24 - 25, Will Rogers Memorial Center, <https://www.fortworthgemandmineralclub.org/show.html>

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

Ref: Local Shows, https://www.scfms.net/local_shows.htm

NEXT MEETING –ST. PATRICK'S DAY POTLUCK DINNER

When: Saturday, March 3, 2025

Time: 7:30 PM

What to Bring: A Dish to Share
Veggie, Dessert, Drink, etc.



See the Minutes (page 5) for Dishes People Have Chosen.

VISIT AN AREA CLUB

[Arlington Gem & Mineral Club](#), meets the 1st Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm, 1408 Gibbins, Arlington, TX

[CERA 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 Monday of each month at 7:00 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

Chips and Chatter

See the Chips and Chatter online for color!

February 2025

Pleasant Oaks Gem and Mineral Club of Dallas, TX

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FROM THE DESK OF THE [AFMS] PRESIDENT

By J.C. Moore, AFMS President, from the February 2025 AFMS Newsletter

As we begin a new year, I hope everyone had a successful 2024. After attending most of the regional conventions last year, I look forward to attending all seven conventions in 2025. With the first convention being the AFMS/Eastern Convention in Hickory, North Carolina, March 27 -30, there is not much time to delay in getting all our "ducks in a row" since reports will be due early this year.

The following weekend, April 5-6, the Midwest Federation will be holding their Convention in Lincoln, Nebraska. Based on previous experience with the hospitality of the Lincoln Club, this should be a great experience for all who attend (65th Show, Club's 70th Anniversary).

The California Federation Convention is scheduled for May 10-11 in Lancaster, California, followed by the Northwest Federation September 12-14 in Walla

Walla, Washington and the following weekend, September 19 – 21, the Rocky Mountain Federation in Grand Junction, Colorado.

While there will be a lot of traveling, the possibility of collecting during these visits is exciting, even if my children insist that their parents have more than enough rocks, as if there is such a thing. We also look forward to seeing rocky friends and making new ones.

As we recuperate from the Holidays, I hope everyone received many blessings during the past year and will receive many more in 2025. Looking forward to seeing all in Hickory and at all the other Conventions.



A Good Idea Built to Last — The Gem Scoop

By Jennifer Haley, AFMS Historian, from the February 2025 AFMS Newsletter

In April 1961, Ernest Estwing of the Estwing Mfg. Co. of Rockford, Illinois, makers of World-Famous Rock Picks and Sportsman's Axes, introduced his invention called the Gem Scoop. This same scoop is still sold today. Back in the day, it sold for only \$7.50. Today, the same scoop or updated version sells for up to \$65!

What is fun to note is the thought that went into creating the actual scoop so many of us have carried with us. The idea for it came from three rockhounding friends from different parts of the country who each wished for a particular type of tool to assist them on field trips.

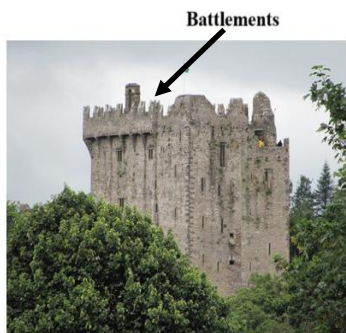
One woman friend from Arizona wished for a tool to use for chasing snakes away while collecting and for grabbing specimens from under prickly cholla cactus and other precarious spots. An Idaho friend wished for a good climber's tool. Another friend wished for a scoop that would help him get specimens out of the water in Lake Superior. All three friends thought a cane-type tool would be very effective for what they needed.

After listening to his friends, Ernest spent the winter of that same year inventing and manufacturing the scoop. It was created to be the ideal tool collectors in every region of the country would want to have. The Gem Scoop was and is an ideal tool for its many uses. Skin-divers and beachcombers can use it to explore rocks, shells, sea glass, and clams. You can rake and pick up things without hurting your back, and it makes a good hiking cane up and down slopes while collecting. My guess is on a camping trip you could also use it as a handy back scratcher.

The original tool was 36" long, which you can buy new today. You can also buy the same size that comes in a more compact design, which folds up for easier traveling. There's a 42" version in either a solid cane style or as a folding type. Prospecting and lapidary supply companies sell the scoop either under the original name, Gem Scoop, or as Treasure Scoop.

The Blarney Stone – a Texas Connection?

Don Shurtz, Pleasant Oaks Gem and Mineral Club



Blarney Castle, Ireland

The Blarney Stone is one of Ireland's most famous tourist attractions. Legends say kissing the Blarney Stone is supposed to give you "the gift of gab." The Blarney Stone is a large block of limestone that rings the top of Blarney Castle. It is part of the castle's battlements (a defensive structure for repelling attacks). The battlements are built in such a way as to extend beyond the natural roof of the building/castle. This is the case for Blarney Castle – to kiss the Blarney Stone, one must lean backward over the parapet (a wall around the roof's edge) with an associate holding on to the lower legs and feet, then reach out to the battlement and plant the kiss. Kissing the

Battlements Atop Blarney Castle

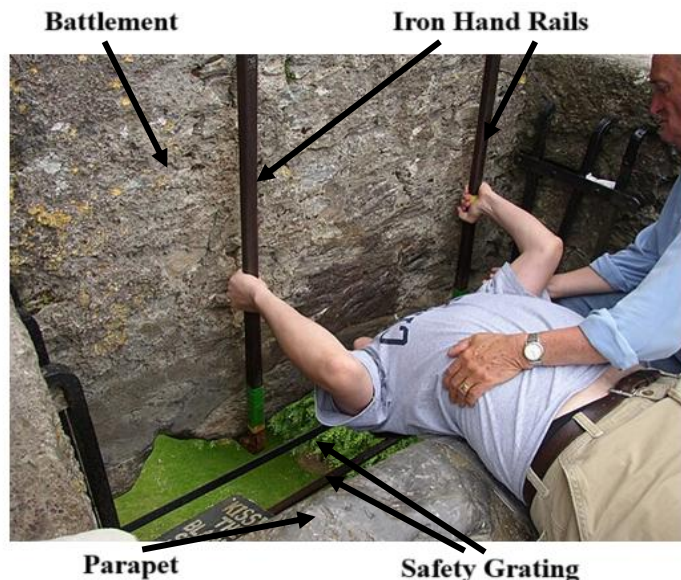


Note the iron straps around the Blarney Stone

Blarney Stone was a dangerous undertaking. Today, iron rails have been attached to the Blarney Stone to hold on to, and an iron grating has been added to connect the base of the parapet to the battlements – it will prevent a person from dropping head-first to the ground. I imagine there is still a risk of a headache if you slip and fall head-first into the iron grating.

If the Blarney Stone is in Ireland, how could there be a connection to Texas? In 1939, Texas Tech (Lubbock, TX) unveiled a monument with a piece of the Blarney Stone atop the memorial. According to a PDF article from the Southwest Collections / Special Collections Library at Texas Tech, a group of petroleum engineers found the piece of the Blarney Stone on March 7, 1939, on a field trip to Ireland. After carefully examining the stone, they found it matched a piece of the Blarney Stone that had disappeared from Blarney Castle in 1659.

After the unveiling, Dosh McCreary, president of the Engineering Society, proclaimed that upon graduation, engineers "should kiss the Blarney Stone and thereby receive the gift of eloquent speech." He also stated that only seniors could kiss the stone – underclassmen were to pay it their utmost respect. Ling is a graduate engineer from Texas Tech, but she had never heard of the Blarney Stone on campus, and to her knowledge, no one from her graduating class had kissed the Blarney Stone. So much for trying to establish a new tradition – sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. (https://swco.ttu.edu/University_Archive/pdf/1987.pdf)



Pictures: Blarney Castle pictures from Wikimedia, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>, used by CCA – SA2
Blarney Stone Monument from Google Maps, <https://www.google.com/maps>, used under Fair Use

Chips and Chatter

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March 2025

OFFICERS FOR 2024 – 2025

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 e-mail: don.shurtz@gmail.com or
L.SHURTZ@gmail.com

Minutes of the February 10, 2025 Meeting

Call to Order: President Joe Vulk called the meeting to order at 7:30.

Visitors: There were no visitors

Minutes: The minutes of the January 2025 meeting were published in the February Chips and Chatter. Don made a motion to accept the Minutes as published. Brenda seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Treasurers report. Ling presented the Treasurer's Report for November. Brenda made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. Cheryl seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Old Business: There was no old business

New Business:

1. The March meeting will be our annual St. Patrick's Day **potluck dinner. We sorted out who would bring particular items to avoid duplication. Here is a list of dinner items:**

Ling will prepare the corned beef and cabbage. Cheryl will bring soda bread. Don will bring Irish potatoes (colcannon), Brenda and Eden will bring a dessert, Hatt will bring tea, and Carole will bring a surprise. If you are not on the list, bring something you like and can share.

2. Mr. Tom Dill from the Dallas Paleo Society will give a presentation at our April meeting.

Break: We took a short break to grab a snack and to do the door prize raffle.

Presentation: A video from YouTube, *Risky Business - How People Risk Their Lives Hunting for Gems, Pearls, and Gold* was viewed

Raffle: We had the raffle

Meeting adjourned

Respectively submitted
Don Shurtz

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The 11-day Caribbean cruise that Brenda and I recently took was okay. The ports of call were Costa Rica, Panama, Aruba, and Grand Cayman. It was an enjoyable trip in spite of the fact that I came down with Influenza A. I was confined to our stateroom for the two days that we were in Costa Rica and Panama. Brenda kept me company and did not venture off the ship to do the main reason for our trip – to see the workings of the canal locks.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the February meeting.

I'm looking forward to our next get-together on March 3rd and the St. Patrick's Day meal and social.

On March 17th, I will be celebrating my 84th birthday. It has always been such fun for me with everything done in green. I have so many fond memories of past St. Patrick's Day birthdays.

Joe Vulk

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on March 3, 2025, at the Knights of Columbus Hall starting at 7:00 PM. This will be our annual St. Patrick's Day Potluck Dinner and Social.

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PLEASANT OAKS GEM and MINERAL CLUB of DALLAS



Meetings

First Monday of each month, KofC Hall, 3722 Cavalier Dr., Garland, TX. 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 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 Monday, March 3, 2025. We will meet at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 3722 Cavalier Drive, Garland, TX. This will be our Annual St. Patrick's Day Potluck Dinner and Social.

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