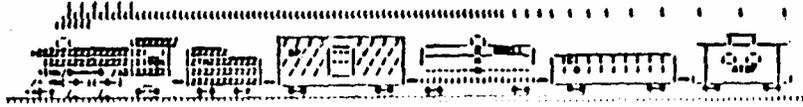




# The OPAL EXPRESS

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JEWETT PATTEE, EDITOR

## NEWS OF THE SHOW

First, the date! It seems that the October date was the same week-end as Homecoming; since we couldn't provide the type of security that we need to offer our dealers in this "Open Campus" situation we have changed the date to November 18th and 19th.

The location is the beautiful Student Union Building at California State University at Long Beach. The show will be held on the top ~story and will have access by elevator and ramps.

For as long as I can remember we have had an exciting name for our Annual Show. This year we are going to call it like we see it. The title of our show will be "THE OPAL SHOW."

Also, we are going -to have a series of seminars; three each day; given by experts in their fields. The fee for each seminar will be \$10.00.

This year, you will not only be able to shop for the world's most beautiful gem stone, but you will be able to enhance your education at the same time.

Members in the local area will be pleased to hear that the Northrop Recreation Gem and Mineral Club is presenting its 26th annual show the weekend of April 1st and 2nd at Northrop Technical Center Cafeteria, on Wilkie Av in Hawthorne. The entrance is one-half block north of El Segundo Blvd. on Wilkie Ave., the first signal east of Crenshaw. This club is presenting its first show in several years.

Other shows this month are March 4th and 5th, South Bay L & M Club, Torrance Recreation Center, Torrance Blvd and Hawthorne -- also Monrovia Rockhounds, Masonic Temple, on Foothill Blvd, -- March 11th and 12th, Pasadena Lapidary Society, Masonic Lodge 2425 Seneca St. Pasadena. -- March 18th and 19th, San Fernando Valley Gem Fair, Valley Plaza Park, North Hollywood. -- Last but not least, March 18th and 19th, Norwalk Rockhounds, Masonic Lodge on Rosecrans.

LETTER FROM THE PREZ!

There has been a change in the Show Date at U.C. Long Beach. It seems the Homecoming weekend was scheduled for the same time we requested. Student and University activities have priority over outside organizations. The new dates for the show are Nov 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> with Nov. 17 as set-up day for dealers and exhibitors.

I spoke to Bill Judd, one of our founding members of yore! That's a long time ago when the Club became a Society with a single stone, Opal, coming from all parts of the world as its only nuance.

Bill pit in a lot of time making and keeping the Opal Society running. I have just found that he is and has been in poor health and a few months back had a colostomy.

His garage, in which is stored some of the seminar materials, is in a mess as a result of the Whittier Narrows earthquake.

Can we get a work crew together to help put it in order and show a bit of compassion for a member in need, especially one who has done so much for our Opal Society?

Opal lovers are lucky as stone lickers. Most stones coming from Opal Clay or Sand have no known dangerous chemicals/elements mixed in with the rough. But if you touch that tongue to an unknown stone, other than opal, you take the risk of coming in contact with such hazardous chemicals/elements as arsenic, mercury, and selenium, as well as some boron minerals and phosphates that are poisonous. Don't be like the fish, stay out of trouble by keeping your mouth shut. Use a spray bottle or spit on it, don't lick it.

I would like you, as members, to write 10 - 1000 words on what you would like to see in your newsletter and the upcoming seminar at the annual Show in November. All ideas submitted will get individual attention, as time as space allows, will be shared with the rest of the membership. Please write, we don't know what you want if you don't tell us.

Unlike stones that are faceted for color and clarity, Opal is easy to cut and polish when one learns the simple steps of orienting, cutting for color, roughing in the shape and polishing. Come to the Workshop and share your mistakes that brought the final accomplishment of that great stone you now possess.

There are several trips to the Opal Mines of Mexico planned by Parian Travel, Inc. 6 days / 5 nights for \$795.00. For more information, call or write, Parian Travel, Inc., 468 S. Sierra Madre Blvd., Pasadena, CA. 91107. Telephone (818) 577-8200.

I would like to commend those in the Founding Chapter who have set up moneymaking projects to help their coffers. Not asking, what do I get out of this, but will the Chapter Prosper? Can you come out and help, or do you have an idea to pit to work?

Dick Koch

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dick Koch". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name "Dick Koch".

Stone / Property	Hardness Toughness	Reaction To Setting	Reaction To Polishing	Reaction To Heating And Repairs Which Require Torch	Reaction To Boiling	Reaction To Steaming	Reaction To Acids, Pickling & Plating	Comments
Amber	H: 2 - 2 ½ T: poor	Very poor will scratch easily	poor	Very poor stone will melt or burn	Very poor, do not boil	poor	Very poor – may dissolve	
Amethyst Citrine (Quartz)	H: 6 ½ - 7 T: good	good	good	fair; color may change with heat	fair-good	fair good	good-fair	
Aquamarine (Beryl)	H: 7 ½ - 8 T: good-fair	good-fair	good	poor, stone may change color with heat	fair-poor; avoid temperature changes	fair	good	
Cat's-eye & Alexandrite (chrysoberyl)	H: 8 1/2 T: Very good	Very good	Excellent	good-fair; remove repairs are made near stone; don't get torch too close to stones	good	good	good	
Coral	H: 3-4 T: good-poor	good	poor, use rouge only	Very poor; remove stone before repair	poor; may lose color	fair	Very poor; will dissolve in acid	Coral will be affected by heat.
Diamond	H: 10 T: good	Very good	Excellent	good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	
Emerald (beryl)	H: 7 ½ - 8 T: poor	poor; stones usually flawed and under strain	fair, do not apply heavy pressure	poor; stones should never be heated	poor; should be cleaned in lukewarm water only	poor	poor; stone may crack or lose oil if solutions are too hot	Avoid heat; Chatham and Gilson synthetics react the same as natural stones.
Garnet Rhodolite, Tsavolite	H: 6 ½ - 7 ½ T: good-fair	good-fair; flawed stones are under strain	good	fair- poor; play safe, remove expensive stone before repair	fair-poor	fair	fair-poor; acids may affect polish on stone	
Hematite	H: 5 - 5 1/2 T: good-fair	good-fair	good- fair	poor	good	good	poor; acids attack stones	
Ivory	H: 2 ½ - 3 T: fair	fair	fair-poor, sue light pressure	poor; heat will cause stone to shrink	fair-poor; dyed pieces may lose color	good	fair-poor	
Jadeite & Nephrite	H: 6-7 T: Excellent	Excellent	fair, tripoli may damage polish on stone use only rough	poor; make no repairs close to stone	good; heat may discolor dyed material	good	poor; acid will affect polish on stone	
Kunzite & Spodumene Lapis Lazuli	H: 6-7 T: very poor	poor	fair	poor; stone may loose color	poor; may crack if boiled	poor	fair	Heat may fade color
	H: 5-6 T: fair-poor	fair	fair-poor; Tripoli will harm polish on stone	poor	fair-poor; some dyed stones will lose color	good	poor; will change color; acid will attack pyrite and calcite inclusion	Often Lapis is dyed. Colors may change with heat or acid.
Moonstone (feldspar)	H: 6 - 6 ½ T: fair-poor	good-fair	good-fair	poor	poor	fair	fair-poor	
Opals	H: 5 ½ - 6 ½ T: very poor	poor	poor (avoid heavy pressure)	Very poor; remove stone before repairs are made	poor; boiling will crack stone,; triplets separate	poor	poor	Opals should be examined by shining a light through the stone to see if there are cracks. Do not polish cracked stones.
Pearls	H: 2 ½ - 4 ½ T: fair-poor	fair, maybes take pressure poorly	poor; will affect luster badly	poor; pearls will burn	poor; will lose color tint; maybes separate	fair	Very poor; will dissolve in some acids	Watch for spot in nacre which may indicate hollows in pearl.
Peridot	H: 6 ½ - 7 T: poor – very poor	poor, facet edges chip easily	poor	Very poor; remove stone before repairs or sizing	poor; avoid extreme temperatures	fair-poor	poor	Should not get much heat or pressure.
Ruby and Sapphire	H: 9 T: Very good	Very good	Excellent	Ruby – good; Sapphires may loose color when heated	good	good	good	Watch for oiling or oils with dye. Do not heat.
Shell Cameo	H: 3 ½ T: poor	poor, will crack with excess pressure	poor, polish jewelry lightly with very light pressure	Cannot take heat of repair; will show burn marks	Color will fade if boiled	fair-poor	Very poor; will dissolve in some acids	Cameos made of shell are very delicate and will not take much heat or pressure.
Spinel	H: 8 T: good-fair	Very good-fair	Very good	good-fair; remove repairs are made near stone	good-fair	good	good	
Tanzanite	H: 6 ½ T: poor	poor	fair (avoid heavy pressure)	Very poor; remove stone before repairs are made	poor	poor	fair	Will not take much heat or pressure
Topaz	H: 8 T: poor	fair-poor; take care stone cleaves easily	good	poor; stones may crack or lose color	poor	poor	good	Any heating may discolor or crack stone.
Tourmaline	H: 7 - 7 ½ T: good-fair	good-fair	good	fair-poor	fair	fair	good-fair	May lighten color with heat during repairs.
Turquoise	H: 5-6 T: good-poor	fair	fair	Very poor; stone may explode with hear	poor; may lose color	fair	Very poor; may dissolve in acids	Takes heat and pressure poorly. Color mad fade in untreated stones.
Zircon	H: 6 - 7 ½ T: poor	poor	fair	poor	poor	poor	fair	Does not take heat well. Brittle – will chip easily.

NEWS FROM THE FOUNDING CHAPTER----President Hal Brees, 714-820-6446

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!!!! This month marks the 22nd Anniversary of the Founding of the American Opal Society, Inc. I am happy to be a part of this warm and friendly group; and as your President, I will do everything in my power to maintain enthusiasm, support and bright ideas. I'd like to express my thanks to all who have given me their support and also to all the past Presidents who have helped in constituting today's American Opal Society.

We have had a total of 14 Presidents since the Society was formed. It all started one spring night at Harry Condo's Rock Shop in Seal Beach. Harry and Laura Condo, with the encouragement of his friend Hugh Leiper, Editor of Lapidary Journal, set up the first Society devoted to a single gemstone. The group was formally incorporated on July 20, 1968. Our lifetime members, Bill and Della Judd were also instrumental in forming the Society and were Charter members, numbers 0001, & 0002.

Our February meeting was well attended. We had a delicious pot luck with all the trimmings. Thank you to everyone who participated. The ladies brought in sweatshirts that had been hand-painted to sell as a fund raiser. There may be a few green ones at the March meeting. Speakers for the evening were Cliff Coan and Dick Koch. Thank you fellas for an enriching education in "Orienting for Color."

The theme for our monthly pot-luck meeting for March is "Kiss Me Blarney Stone," to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. Look through your favorite Irish recipes and come join in the fun and friendship. -The meeting is March 9th, at the Santa Fe Springs Library. Potluck starts 7:00 pm, meeting at 8:00 pm. Green will be the uniform of the day.

The gifts everyone donated to the raffle are fantastic. Thanks. We still save aluminum cans; bring them in.

A warm welcome to the new corners. Hope to see you in March.

Hello and get wells to Bill and Della Judd, Joe Vezeau, Jake and Rita Schmidt and Hal (That's me) Brees, and all the rest of the flu bug sufferers.

Last, but not least, we would like to wish you all a Happy Easter!

Ed's note: Thanks to the Founding Chapter Secretary, Cathy Doten, for preparing and submitting the information above. Well done.

## SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT OPAL, IS IT A "BAD LUCK STONE"?

BY RICHARD G. KOCH

For many years man has wondered what gives opal the brilliant, fiery colors found in some specimens.

With the introduction of the electron microscope, scientists have found opal is composed of transparent silica spheres tightly packed together in an orderly arrangement. This structure is called "diffraction grating". When the spheres are of uniform size and regularly stacked, opal exhibits a strong display of color ranging through the entire spectrum. This structure can also explain why some stones may be unstable, and why opal has the reputation of a "bad luck stone".

Opal has a water content of 3% - 13%. When stored in a safe deposit box or other air-tight container, lacking humidity, it may dry out and fractures may appear, or worse, may not be apparent until the stone is set. At this time, - when the prongs are pressed down to tighten the stone in place, an internal stress may be created causing the stone to fall apart. Thus, the term "BAD LUCK STONE". A jeweler, not understanding the structure and care of opals, will think of it as a bad luck stone with which he may not be able to get a return on his investment.

To store opal in an air tight place, - put the stone or rough in a zip-lock bag with some moisture. This will eliminate the danger of drying out.

Many beautiful stones are on display in museums and private collections or set in jewelry, which has been worn for many years. Remember, opal, with proper care will maintain its fiery beauty and give pleasure for many years.

Some other factors that determine the stability of opal are the locations in which it is found and the way it is mined. Some areas have opal with a great deal of water content, while others may have been stressed by earth movement or mining operations. These latter - two may produce opal of questionable stability. Another factor is the way the rough is treated by the cutter. If a stone is allowed to become too warm in the grinding and polishing process, a stress is set up that in the future, may cause the stone to fracture. Of course, an important part in selecting rough, is to inspect it carefully for fractures before purchasing. A stone should not be considered finished until the back is lapped flat and the edges beveled with a 450 chamfer X .010 - .020. This allows the jeweler to set the stone in the bezel or other setting reducing the danger of chipping. The lapped back prevents a rocking motion that the jeweler may try to compensate for by undue pressure of the prongs or bezel. This extra pressure on any cross-section or quadrant, may set up a strain that can cause a fracture at the first bump

or shock. Therefore opal is "bad luck"! NOT REALLY, IF IT IS CUT AND SET PROPERLY.

The most intriguing thing about opal is that the diffraction grating is never exactly duplicated. You will never find two stones the same in color, intensity or pattern. If a stone does break, maybe you will be able to find another that nearly matches, but never exactly. More "bad luck"? Not necessarily, you can break or scratch other stones too.

When an opal is mounted like a diamond or ruby, etc., the buyer is presented with an unprotected stone sitting up in a prong setting, subject to fracture or loss. "Bad Luck"? No, BAD SETTING by an inexperienced jeweler.

The style of the setting as well as the size and cut of the opal should be considered very carefully before mounting. When a buyer invests in an exceptional stone, he expects the piece of jewelry to last a lifetime and be handed down to his children. The opal must be set down in a protective frame of metal or accent stones for a ring or bracelet to take the abuse of non-caring people. "Bad luck" will continue, if this practice is not carried out. Again, a properly set stone has a great life expectancy.

Diamonds are the most popular stones used to enhance the opal setting. Only the opal will give a constant and ever changing color pattern that is pleasing to the eye, even in the dimmest light. A stone showing brilliant flashing colors in a crystal base is truly "THE QUEEN OF GEMS" in all her splendor, never to be equaled.

Diamond people say, "Opal is bad luck." Why then, when these two precious stones are found together, is the Queen "Opal" always surrounded by the diamond? Because mounted the other way around, small brilliant, fiery opal framing a diamond, the diamonds' luster would become secondary to that of "OUR OPAL, QUEEN OF GEMS."

At the February Board meeting one of the directors mentioned that an instructor at Huntington Park High School was setting up a Lapidary class and was in need of machinery of all types, cutting -materials and related lapidary items. If you have any of these things that you do not need and would like to see them put to good use, call Joyce at the office, and she will give you the information. Another local school that has a lapidary class is Paramount High School. These teachers should be commended for their work in furthering our hobby and any help you can give them would be greatly appreciated. The office number is: 213-869-0527.

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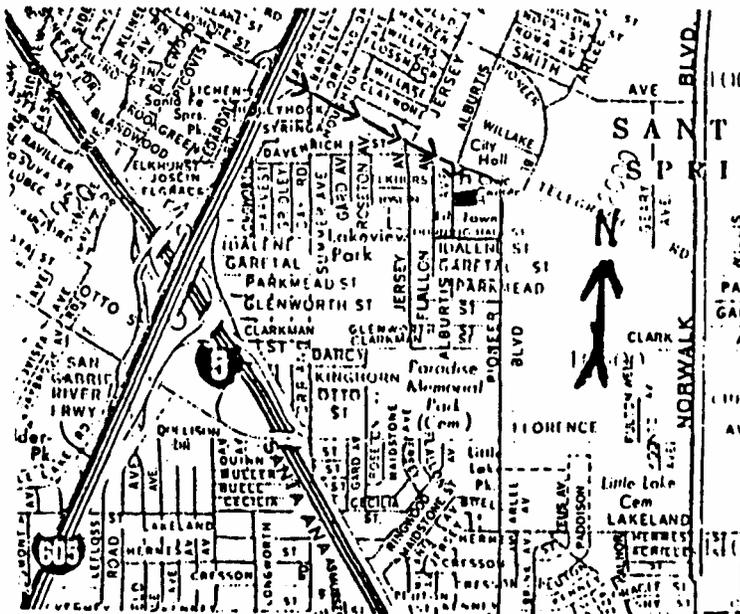
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