

The Opal Express
 American Opal Society
 P.O. Box 382
 Anaheim, CA 92815-0382



Member

Member



Volume #30 Issue #08 August 1998



TO:

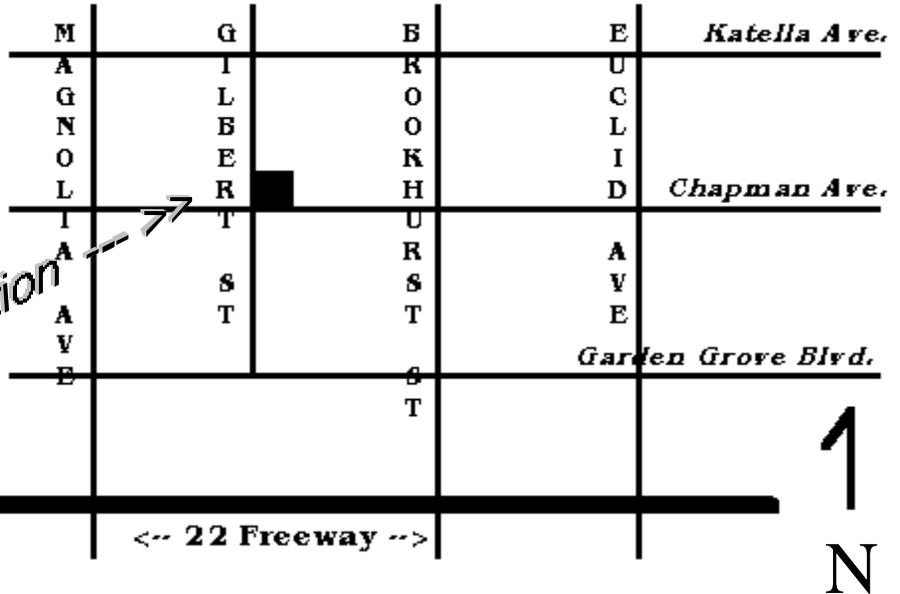
GENERAL MEETINGS —

2nd Thursday 7:00-9:00 PM
 Garden Grove Civic Women's Club
 9501 Chapman Ave.
 (NE corner of Gilbert & Chapman)
 Garden Grove, CA

MEETING ACTIVITIES

Opal Cutting Advice Guest Speakers
Slide Shows Videos Other Activities

Meeting Location →



American Opal Society Officers

Wes Roth	President	(714) 897-2984 email wesroth@earthlink.net
Carol Bova	Vice Pres.	(818) 845-8610 email bova@bovagems.com
Mike Kowalsky	Treasurer	(714) 761-4876 email mykowalsky@aol.com
Pete Goetz	Secretary	(714) 666-2084 email mpg1022@aol.com
Russ Madsen	Editor	(562) 425-9788 email 76550.1366@compuserve.com

DUES POLICY REVISED - effective 1/1/98

Henceforth, memberships begin in the month a person joins the Opal Society. This simplifies the fee structure and will reduce questions and errors in dues payments.

Three (3) Dues Rates are for families and are now based on your county of residence.

Rate #1 (\$26): **Local area** = members who reside in Los Angeles, Orange, or Riverside counties.

Rate #2 (\$20): **California & USA** = all US addresses other than local counties.

Rate #3 (\$30): **Foreign** = all memberships outside USA.

SENIOR DISCOUNT: Age 65 and over, deduct \$5 from the above rates.

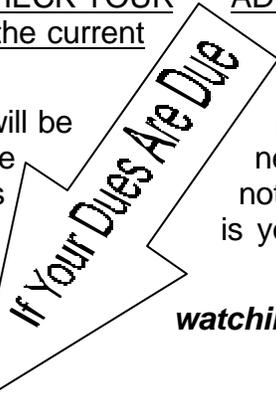
Label Changes: Your address label now displays your dues expiration date as MM-YY where MM is the month and YY is the year your dues expire. Expiration dates also appear in the membership roster.

Are Your Dues Due Now? PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL or the membership roster if you are listed there. If your label shows the current month/year your dues are DUE NOW. If the date is older, your dues are **overdue**.

Renewal Grace Period of two months will be received. If your dues are due now you will receive two additional issues of the newsletter. Please note however that as the system is now set up, if your renewal is dropped from membership thereafter. It is your responsibility to assure your dues are current.

provided. If your dues are due now you will receive two additional issues of the newsletter. Please note however that as the system is now set up, if your renewal is dropped from membership thereafter. It is your responsibility to assure your dues are current.

Please help us make this work by renewing promptly. Thanks!



watching your expiration date and



DUES RENEWAL FORM

(membership renewal form rev. 1/1/98)

d:\ameropa\news\trsf\forms\dues_due.pub



American Opal Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 382

Thank you for continuing to support your American Opal Society!!
Make check or money order payable to: American Opal Society, Inc.
Please mail payment and renewal form to the club address at left.

DUES RENEWAL RATES (select one)**	
1) LOCAL AREA member (\$26.00) (addresses in Los Angeles, Orange, & Riverside counties)	\$26.00
2) CALIFORNIA & USA (\$20.00) (all addresses outside local area counties)	\$20.00
3) FOREIGN (\$30.00) (all addresses outside USA)	\$30.00
** \$5 SENIOR DISCOUNT = Age 65 or over <deduct \$5.00 from above>	

DEALER LIST: Yes, include my name/address on a list provided to Opal Dealers selling at the most recent Opal Show.

without your signature here you will not be included in the dealer info list

(if yes, please sign or initial here) _____ date _____

MEMBERSHIP ROSTER: Yes, include my name and/or address and/or phone information in a published AOS membership directory...
[Please circle any of these —> **NAME** / **ADDRESS** / **PHONE** if you prefer a partial listing.]

without your signature here you will not be included in the member roster

(if yes please sign or initial here) _____ date _____

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____ APT #: _____ or PO BOX: _____
CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____
C O U N T R Y (I F O U T S I D E U . S .)

NAME BADGE ORDER FORM: (OPTIONAL)
Number of badges ordered _____
(\$5.00 EACH - includes engraving)
PLEASE PRINT NAME AS YOU WISH IT TO APPEAR ON YOUR BADGE using up to two (2) lines of text for your name, nickname or name of your opal related business.

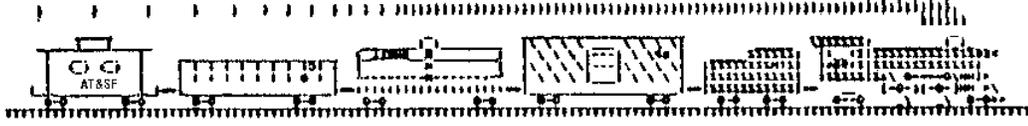
Please indicate any name or mailing address changes

The OPAL EXPRESS

OPAL EXPRESS

Published
monthly
by the
American
Opal
Society

Issue 8



President's Message

from Wes Roth

Greetings,

I would like to wish a speedy recovery to Cliff Coan of the Searchers who is wrestling with a bout of pneumonia. GET WELL SOON from the Opal Society.

Congratulations to Len Cram on his latest book "A Journey with Colour" a truly beautiful book.

Two of our board members, Mike Kowalsky & Jay Carey are currently in Australia with Barbara McCondra touring the mining areas and will be bringing back the latest to us soon.

This months meeting will feature Russ Madsen with a lecture on his recent journey to the opal fields in Black Rock, Nev.

Carol Bova and myself will talk briefly about the auction at Griegers at the end of last month. A different experience to say the least.

See you at the meeting
Wes Roth
President

You may be a rockhound ifyou are thinking of adding another room onto the house as a storage area.

Board of Directors Meeting Reminder

Directors Meeting Monday August 10th 7PM...Directors please try to attend our Board meetings which are always the Monday before the regular meeting = next Monday evening. Meetings are at the Workshop and begin at 7:00 PM. For your reference a listing of current board members appears on Page 7 of this issue of the newsletter. We need to get working in earnest with Opal Show planning and arrangements. Much publicity has already been handled by Stan McCall. Now it's time for working on the show room floor plans, signage for the hotel grounds, getting members signed up as show workers etc. Other items for the board to address include future workshop arrangements as the current shop room lease expires in December. ✨



Work Shop Information...

The Opal Society workshop is located in a light industrial complex in Fullerton. The address is Unit #9, 651 N. State College Blvd.

Directions: exit the 91 Fwy onto State College Blvd. and go north. Proceed through the intersection of Orangethorpe continuing a short distance further on State College. Go over the railroad tracks and turn left into the complex on the west side of the street. If you go over the second RR crossing turn around. Proceed behind the front row of businesses and make your first right. Then follow the road around to the left. The workshop has a large "9" over the door.

Only AOS members may use the equipment and workshop. You will be required to sign a release form as well.

Workshop Schedule on Page 5 shows dates/times and appointment instructions. ✨

DATES TO REMEMBER

General Meeting

Thurs Aug 13th

7:00PM

Director's Meeting

Monday Aug 10th

7:00PM

AOS Opal & Gem Show

Nov 7th & 8th, 1998

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Opal Digging at the Black Rock By Russ Madsen

We departed for northern Nevada somewhat stressed by delays that left us two days behind schedule. Rather than a relaxed wander up Hwy 395 we drove 525 miles directly to the Carson Valley Inn; then departed the next morning and drove another 350 miles directly to the Black Rock Desert - northeast of Carson City, Nevada.

The final 35 miles of dirt road north of Gerlach to the Royal Rainbow Opal Mine is somewhat rough, including sections of sand and a number of erosion gullies. We took it easy slowing often for the well-placed caution ribbons marking all the gullies. I recalled Paul Downing's comment in an article some time back that this road's rougher than the Black Rock playa. We opted for the road because this was our first time and we did not know exactly where to enter and (more importantly) exit the lake bed. This was a wise choice. The dry lake is at least 10 miles wide and extends nearly 100 miles northeast. With no reference points driving on it proved later to be a dizzying experience.

We reached the Royal Rainbow Opal Mine at sunset and in good time set up camp before darkness fell. I woke the next morning anxious to get up on the hill and see what the digging was like. Mine caretaker, Elseil Philipps, pointed out the road suggesting we use 4WD as a couple of steep sections suffered some erosion in last winter's El Niño rains. She also advised we were experiencing the first sunny day of the season, and here it was June 19th! Sunshine and mild temperatures. Excellent digging conditions!

What I found on the hill was hard vesicular basalt somewhat like that of Opal Canyon, but with very little if any decomposition of the host rock. Thus it is HARD rock digging. There was clear evidence that the lava flowed over various surface features. I noticed opal which formed in curving vugs seemed to have better quality. This is in line with Richard Barnett's theory that the degree of difficulty opal encounters during formation is directly related to the quality of its resulting color play. Elsa agreed with this assessment adding that the opal which does not completely fill vugs very seldom evidences any color play. I did locate several partially filled vugs and when the opal in these was clear it tended to exhibit nice contra luz color play.

I dug in several different spots then moved to a location up on the hill. I was brushing and cleaning dirt off a boulder of good size, perhaps 3 feet in diameter when a thin slice of clear opal peeled off a filled vug. This showed the first mentionable color play I had found. I then spent the rest of the afternoon breaking half of this boulder into smaller and smaller pieces. In the process I located several nice fills and

a few more stones with some color play - not gem quality but interesting enough to encourage further digging energy after a break to enjoy the pretties.

As evening fell I was set to remove several good size vugs and decided to leave the "fun" for the morrow. Next morning I was back on the hill and chiseling the final chunks out of the way. Within a couple hours a dense dark cloud began rumbling over the crest of the hill. I had heard thunder in the distance but now the sky darkened, lightning flashed, and thunder rolled and pounded. Soon large drops of rain began falling. Many other clouds were moving across the valley adorned with dark gray rain-drapery. As the rain increased, it was clear the storm cloud was going to pass directly over the mine. I scrambled down to the Pathfinder and made my way back to camp. Jane was glad I was off the hill before something happened or the road became impassably muddy - happily, neither happened.

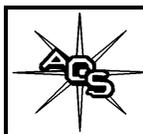
For the remainder of the afternoon the storm moved through. We learned later that it rained very hard in some parts of the valley. When Jane and I took a short motorcycle ride down the main dirt road after dinner we encountered significant pooling in several places. Typical desert storm, downpour here, damp or dry there.

Next morning, we went back up on the hill. By now I had begun to figure out "what was what" and had a fair idea how to search out a possible seam. I climbed up above the main digging areas and came upon a spot where I pried off a chunk of rock about the size of a bowling ball. What a treat! A significant portion of the exposed side was entirely covered with opal fills! Also, the rock face remaining on the ground was similarly adorned. I will bring these to the meeting to share. There were several such rocks at this spot.

Much of the opal I found exhibited little or no color play at all, but Elsa urged me to keep it all as some will pick up color later. Since I have seen this happen with Opal Canyon opal, I was already planning to keep everything. In fact Jane was making some rather concerned noises because I had her car just about dragging the ground and there was still more digging time. Uh oh.

To reduce the load, I spent a few hours breaking the big

(Continued on page 9)



PLEASE NOTE!!! The American Opal Society assumes no responsibility for injury or damage due to accidents or carelessness. Members and guests assume all risks during club activities.



Name Badges...

Price per badge is \$5 which includes the badge itself and engraving of up to two lines of text: one line for your first and last name and, if you wish, a second line for nickname or if applicable, your opal related business name. These engraving options give members flexibility to include many types of identification.

Please allow 3 to 4 weeks for completion of engraving. ☼

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Editor---Russ Madsen

Please address all inquiries to:

The Opal Express, P.O. Box 382, Anaheim, CA 92815-0382

E-mail 76550.1366@compuserve.com

(Deadline for items: 15th of the month prior to each issue)

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

#1173 Dick Reed
#1174 William Smith



Membership Roster Changes/Additions

New Listing - Dick Reed	2743 W. Broadway	Anaheim, CA 92804	(714) 527-2480	Member #1173	Dues Expire 99-08
New Listing - William Smith	1601 W. Inglewood St.	Broken Arrow, OK 74011	(918) 455-1766	Member #1174	Dues Expire 99-08
Changes -Leonard Toelk	P.O. Box 1524	Wall St. Station	New York, NY 10268-1524	Member # 1172	Dues Expire 99-07

Spencer Opal Triplets

By Warren Taft of the Eugene Mineral Society, Oregon
Contributed by Sieg Vogel

[Editor's note: Sieg showed and discussed Spencer Opal at the last general meeting. This article recapitulates that presentation]

This article is intended to aid the buyer of Spencer Opal (from Spencer, Idaho).

Spencer Opals are usually triplets, which means they are three pieces glued together with clear epoxy, grounded, sanded, and polished either in calibrated sizes or free forms. This procedure makes each one unique. Stones range in size from less than a quarter to silver dollar size (38mm).

Triplet construction

The opals are constructed in three parts. The bottom part is black basalt of better grade. The center is a very thin layer of fire opal, ground perfectly flat and glued to the base. The top layer is usually optical grade quartz of the best quality, also glued to the layer of fire opal.

Fire types

Types of fire include pinfire, harlequin, and broad flash.

Pin fire has small points of fire approximately the size of a pin head or smaller.

Harlequin is larger, maybe the size of a match head.

Broad flash is large splotches of fire (or color).

Fire color

Fire color appears in reds, oranges, gold, yellow, blue, green, fuchsia, purple and many combinations. Some opals have a combination of pinfire, harlequin and/or broad flash and a combination of colors. This gives Spencer Opals a bigger variety of fire types and color

(Spencer)
Opals can also
be used in
rings since
the quartz
protects the
opal from
damage.

ITEMIZATION

ITEM:

CFMS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

It was my pleasure to attend the 59th annual California Federation of Mineralogical societies Mineral and Gem Show at Monterey CA Fairgrounds, hosted by the Central Coast clubs. As your AOS director, I attended the Saturday, July 4th Board of Directors meeting. A quorum was present with 98 clubs represented and 18 officers and Committee Chairpersons. The meeting was conducted by Beverly Moreau (CFMS President 1998). All CFMS business was discussed with many reports, motions etc. Future annual shows will be:

1999 Turlock, CA
2000 Riverside, CA
2001 Las Vegas, NV

The weather was cool and the show setting was beautiful, show displays and exhibits were excellent and many dealer were present. Some dealers will be at our AOS show in November.

**-submitted by AOS Federation Director
Harold Andersen** ☼

ITEM: The Los Angeles Mineralogical Society announces the date of its annual Auction and Luncheon will be September 19, 1998. All AOS members are invited. Auction activity will include a SILENT AUCTION, cash and many other door prizes, and this year a special offering – more than 100 specimens from the collection of one mineralogist, gathered when good collecting sites were open to the public in California and elsewhere, will be offered. Luncheon reservations are required and must be confirmed by Sept 16th.

All Opal Society members are invited to this event. Reservation forms and maps will be available at the August and September meetings, pick up your forms there or call any officer and we'll mail one to you. ☼

(Continued on page 5)

Spencer Opal Triplets

(Continued from page 4)

combinations that Australian Opal.

Opal jewelry

Fine jewelry necklace pendants can be set in gold wire wrap or mounted in solid gold mountings. Opals can also be used in rings since the quartz protects the opal from damage.

When looking at Spencer Opals to purchase, look for flaws, the type of color (fire), the color play in various types of light: incandescent, fluorescent, quartz and sunlight, and in the shade. Also pay attention to the light from in front of you, back and straight down. Examine the sides of the stone straight on and roll the specimen from side to side in the various lights and positions. ✨



In a recent conversation with an opalcoholic whose travels included Australia it was mentioned that more than half of all finished opal offered for sale in Australia is in the form of doublets and triplets. -rgm

Remember When?

A Look Into Past Newsletter Items

ITEMS TAKEN FROM THE AMERICAN OPAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER DATED DECEMBER 6, 1972

General Item: Care to save the high cost of stainless steel casting flasks? Why not check with your local muffler shop or garage for odds and ends of tailpipe? Being stainless steel they make beautiful casting flasks when cut to the desired length.

This nugget of information is credited to Bill Judd

General Item: Are you one of those who sat their own rings? If so you have probably experienced that awful feeling in the pit of your stomach when you approached the counter of your local lapidary shop and checked the price of casting gold, 14k variety. With me that price of \$50.00 to \$53.00 per ounce brings on instant paralysis of the vocal cords and the arm nearest the wallet.

But listen, I have news for those who were not aware of this! Last week I purchased 100 dwt of 14K casting gold (actually 13.5K because 14K is legally $14 \pm .5K$) for \$201.10, or \$40.22 per ounce. For those who are interested, this may be done by purchasing your gold from Handy & Harman, in amounts of 100 dwt minimum. A further price break is obtained at 200 dwt, where it would have been approximatedly \$8.00 cheaper. -Editor Vic Mayo ✨

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Be sure to check here for workshop schedule updates. The dates listed below are those available to the AOS in our time share agreement with the Searchers. The shop is presently being opened to members on Wednesday nights but...**Please continue to contact Stan McCall by calling him at Lapidary Intl. (714) 827-5680 if you plan to attend a shop session.**

August 1998

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

WORKSHOP RULES

These rules are effective October 1, 1997. Please see newsletter for monthly shop schedule.

- 1) Shop may only be used by AOS members.
- 2) Shop users must sign liability waiver.
- 3) Shop users must sign in. Shop supervisor will maintain sign-in list and collect usage fees.
- 4) Shop usage will be in sessions on scheduled days as noted below:
 - Session #1 10AM - 2PM
 - Session #2 2PM - 6PM
 - Session #3 6PM - 9PM
- 5) Shop usage fees: effective immediately...
SHOP USAGE FEE IS \$3 PER SESSION.
- 6) To assist us in scheduling, shop sessions need to be reserved in advance. Please contact Stan McCall or any member of the board of directors to reserve shop time.

A Poem by Mayo Hunter
(A Lightning Ridge Miner's Poem)
Submitted by Barbara McCondra

I have a mine
Where some speak Austrine
Where the goats and the woolly pigs stray
Where it's warm and not fridge
Way up here on the Ridge
And the lightning flash turns night to day.

I have a shaft
Fresh air and good draught
A good roof and a level to match
Where I drive on a slide
To the opals that hide
In a pocket and sometimes a patch.

The opal I find
Is such of a kind
Never seen in the whole world about
They dazzle and shine
Like in Solomon's mine
And the buyers eyes pop out.

Well, the above it would seem
Is all but a dream
For it's nothing like that of the sort
To be brutally frank
I'm sure you will thank
An honest and sincere report.

When you've got little dough
You've got to go slow
And gouge in a field that is old
You shovel and scrape
Till your spine's the wrong shape
And try all the things you've been told.

You dig near a blow
On the side down below
And a box tree should be on your claim
You follow the wall
If there is one at all
And dig on a slide is your aim.

Now the country can change
Like a dog with the Mange
And what you've been told differs so
So you work all the more
And dig up the floor
Then end up by smashing your toe.

Then out of the blue
You shout a hooroo
For your pick has struck something like glass
There's a brilliant red band
But it's all full of sand
Just another big kick in the ...backside.

So you crawl an old tunnel
Full of stow dirt and rubble
Seeking traces that'll show you the way
You go this way and that
And it's hard if you're fat
Past old props, falling sandstone and clay.

Now your light has gone out
And you give a shout
But your partner's up top resting' easy
He's probably asleep
On top of the heap
And you suddenly feel a bit queasy.

In a monkey you crawl
Down the side of a wall
And you crash with the curse of the Devil
You show some alarm
For you've broken your arm
At the same time you've found second level.

With your teeth you strike a match
In it's bright flame you catch
The glitter of fire on the face
There's the full rainbow hue
Showing red, orange, blue
And a pattern resembling lace.

You say, "For Gawd's Sake!
What a gem this will make
Thousands and thousands no doubt!"
You've got what it takes
Till your partner awakes
And helps you bloody get out!

It's eventually done
And you reach the hot sun
And take your big stone to the cutter
He grinds and he grinds
And he grinds and he grinds
And the stone melts away just like butter.

You've got to be smart
For the gem cutters art
For there's miracles you just have to see
All the colors and flare
Disappear in the air
And it shrinks from an egg to a pea.

The next part of your plan
Is the buyer from Japan,
And sideways you enter his shack
At the stone he just clucks
Says, "Not worth any blucks.....
Onry interlested with gleen on the brack."

Next stop are the Yanks
And a firm "No t'anks."
So you visit the lot through the day
Then way down the line
One buyer says, "Fine,
But forty bucks is all I can pay."

You are broke and you sell
And you say, "What the Hell!"
The opal game's not what you think
Your moods not the best
So you see DIGGER'S REST
And proceed to get too much to drink! ☼

You may have already seen the enclosed posters, I sent a set to Barbara McCondra and Phil Pearl, but what you don't know is that there were only 1000 of each printed – and ever will be as separate units, which makes them very collectable.

They are three photographs out of my forthcoming opal book, "A Journey with colour" which will be available in three weeks. Because of their collectable value, I thought the society would like a set to use as a door prize for some future event. I am sure that Barbara McCondra will have some for sale for those who may want them when she returns from her upcoming Australian trip.

A little info on the book, it is volume one of a three volume series on the history of Australian Opal. Over 95% of the information and stories which it contains has never been in a book before. It is A4 size and weighs two kilo, about four and a half pounds. You can see why it has to be in three volumes, I anticipate volumes two and three will be about the same weight. Postage alone costs \$US30 airmail to America.

Besides the wealth of information and stories, there are 366 coloured and 26 black and white photographs. I spared no cost with the size of the coloured photography, making them as large as possible, which are printed on high quality Nova-tech Germany paper. There are 11 lead in pages of design and artwork before you reach the first chapter, even the text has been printed over soft gentle opal colours, which makes the book glow and easier to read. This book sets new world standards in artwork and design for opal books, and makes my earlier books look a little like kindergarten work.

Thank you for the Opal Express, I do enjoy reading it, and look forward to receiving it each month – yes I collect them.

kindest regards to all. **Len Cram** ☼

CALIFORNIA FEDPAGE OFFERS ONE-STOP SHOPPING FOR BREAKING NATURAL RESOURCE NEWS

In a bulletin released by the U.S. Dept. of the Interior a new web page has been introduced.

Launched June 14, the California FedPage will help persons looking for information about California natural resources.

The bulletin states, "**Fedpage.doi.gov** will take Internet users to a central site with breaking news from the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Forest Service, and National Park Service."

"Although each cooperating agency already has an established homepage on the Worldwide Web, the FedPage offers an Internet 'front door' and a link to virtually all their other internet servers," said Tony Staed, Deputy Director, External Affairs, for the BLM's California State office.

This site is designed for public land users. Check it out! ☼

Character Profile

by Barbara McCondra

(from time to time Barbara McCondra includes a sketch of a colorful character from the opal fields in Outback Report. Here is one such sketch. -rgm)

MARIE THE FLYING NUN

The wind is blowing hard but this doesn't phase my friend Marie Wilde. She lives out at the three mile field in Lightning Ridge and peddles her "push bike", as two wheelers are called in Australia, the three kilometers to town every day. Marie's skin is fair and the New South

The wind is blowing hard but this doesn't phase my friend Marie Wilde... Marie has been battling windmills for most of her life...

Wales sun is harsh so she wears a large straw sun sombrero with her required safety helmet pushed through it. The wind plays havoc with her balance as she perseveres, but this is nothing new as, once a true nun, Marie HAS BEEN BATTLING WINDMILLS FOR MOST OF HER LIFE. She takes them on gleefully and with love in her heart. She works for the Aboriginal Barrikieneal teaching Aboriginal peoples of the area how to express themselves with pottery making, a totally black women written and published newsletter, and the pursuit of education. She believes in the Universe and in the innate beauty of the human soul. This makes her very vulnerable indeed to the slaps and slams of life. So even though she once told me wine is insidious, occasionally we step out for a night on the town with a few glasses of wine to laugh the stings and bruises away. The next day's sunrise finds her again donning her wings and broadening her smile. ☼

rise finds her again donning her wings and broadening her smile. ☼

(from Outback Report 4/98)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The present Board of Directors consists of the following eleven members (not counting our at large director).

<u>Name</u>	<u>Year Term Began</u>
Harold Andersen	1994
Carol Bova	1997
David Burton	1996
Yvonne Burton	1996
Jay Carey	1992/96
Bob Dixon	1996
Pete Goetz	1997
Mike Kowalsky	1996
Stan McCall	1996
Russ Madsen	1994
Wes Roth	1997

Barbara McCondra 1997 (director at large)

By-Laws permit 12 directors. Terms are 4 years. ☼

CFMS EARTH SCIENCE STUDIES

SEPTEMBER 13 - 20, 1998

CAMP PARADISE



A CFMS Earth Science Seminar will be held at Camp Paradise, about 45 miles northeast of Marysville on Highway E-21. A map to the area will be provided. There will be lectures on flora and fauna of the area and other subjects of interest, field trips for sightseeing, and some collecting. Our primary goal is to provide a place to learn and have fellowship with other rockhounds.

The facilities are a rustic church camp with rooms with double beds and/or cots and with bathrooms and showers inside. Each person is required to furnish a mattress cover (sheet or blanket) to put over the mattress under your other sheets or sleeping bag. Each person is responsible for cleaning his/her own room before leaving.

To register for this fun-filled and interesting seven days, complete this form and mail with payment of \$190.00 per person by August 1, 1998. This fee includes rooms, instructions, field trips, and three meals a day.

Reservations will be taken until August 15, 1998. No cancellation after that date unless there is a replacement.

Send form and payment made out to CFMS to:

Florence Meisenheimer
101 North Wake Forest Avenue
Ventura, CA 93003-2246
(805) 642-3155

Isabella & Bill Burns
Chair Persons

KEEP PART ABOVE THIS LINE

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____
STREET CITY ZIP

I belong to _____ Society, a CFMS Member

Do you use a cane or walker ?

Are you a diabetic , vegetarian ?

PLEASE CHECK THE ACTIVITIES THAT INTEREST YOU:

FIELD TRIPS

- _____ Old mines/boom towns
- _____ Rock collecting
- _____ Mineral collecting
- _____ Fossil collecting
- _____ Gold Panning

LECTURES

- _____ Minerals
- _____ Fossils
- _____ Flora & Fauna
- _____ Geological formations

WORKSHOPS

- _____ Faceting
- _____ Casting
- _____ Stone Carving
- _____ Cabbing
- _____ Wire Wrap
- _____ Ming Trees
- _____ Other

FEES: Room assignments will be on a first payment basis. Fees include rustic lodging, three meals per day, and workshops. There may be small additional fees for materials used in the workshops.

Name and phone number of person to contact in case of emergency _____

Dormitory	\$190.00 per person _____
Double occupancy	\$190.00 per person _____
RV parking	\$190.00 per person _____

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Scientific quiz...

By Russ Madsen

The puzzle in last month's issue was to describe the exterior and interior appearance of the alleged eggs of renowned, but seldom if ever seen, giant sea turtle, sp. Hydro Melonis.

Appearance of the eggs: (1) exterior, typically green with occasional areas of white mottling; (2) interior: richly pink throughout with a thin band of white interfacing the exterior.

Size of the eggs: about equal to the size of a bowling ball.

Where the girl found hers: she dug into the sand a few inches where it had apparently been buried.

Answer: The "egg" of the Giant Sea Turtle, sp. Hydro Melonis, was not an egg at all but was in fact a **WATER MELON** (hydro = water; melonis = melon. Taa daa!!!) ☼



Black Rock Opal Digging

(Continued from page 3)

rocks into smaller pieces keeping only ones where opal was visible. This lightened the load by more than half.

Jane found this area to have the best solitude she has ever experienced. We gazed at a sky filled with stars, marveled at the brilliance of the Milky Way, counted many satellites as they streaked overhead, enjoyed pleasant evening strolls, and did a little dirt bike riding.

For those who make the August meeting you will see our pictures of the mine and surrounding areas. I will also have along a bunch of rock samples showing opal. In the days after we left the mine a considerable number have begun to show some color play.

Tools that proved most useful included good cold chisels 1/2" and 1" wide, sledge hammers, a splitting wedge, small broom, and a rock hammer. I never used the wire cutters

What's Happening?

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Dates and Locations of Shows

Sept 19 10AM-6PM **Sept 20** 10AM-5PM Faceter's Guild of Southern California, 2271 W. Crescent Ave., **Anaheim, CA**

Sept 26 – 27 10AM-5PM Vista Gem & Mineral Society, Brengle Terrace Community Recreation Center, 1200 Vale Terrace, **Vista, CA**

Oct 10 8AM-5PM **Oct 11** 8AM-4PM Searles Lake G&M Soc Lapidary and Show Bldg. **Trona, CA**

Oct 10 9AM-5PM **Oct 11** 9AM-4PM San Bernardino County Fairgrounds, 14800 7th St., **Victorville, CA**

Oct 17 10AM-6PM **Oct 18** 10AM-5P Whittier G&M Soc Whittier Masonic Temple, 7604 Greenleaf Ave., **Whittier, CA**

Oct 24 10AM-6PM **Oct 25** 10AM-5PM El Cajon G&M Soc El Cajon Valley Masonic Temple, 695 Ballantyne

Nov 7 10AM-7PM **Nov 8** 10AM-4PM **American Opal Society OPAL & GEM SHOW**, 616 Convention Way, corner of Katella Ave. and Harbor Blvd., **ANAHEIM, CA**

Jan 22 through Jan 31, 1999 Blythe Rock & Gem Show Colorado River Fairgrounds **BLYTHE, CA**

that are so useful at Opal Canyon. Here on the Black Rock the vugs are either filled with opal or agate. No need to clip windows. A large pry bar is an excellent tool as well, the stronger and bigger the better.

Elselil showed us a very nice piece of opal she found. No idea what it's carat weight is but it is at least 1/2" thick x 2 inches in diameter. Very nice color play too!

The Royal Rainbow Opal Mine is located 35 miles north of Gerlach, NV along the dirt road to the Soldier Meadows Bed & Breakfast. It is the only area mine open to the public for fee digging. Rates are \$40 per day (8 hours) or \$25 per half day (4 hours). Nice campsites are available, along with drinking water, an outhouse, and the highly appreciated solar shower. How sweet it is to dig all day and be able to clean up for dinner!

Elselil will be at Cloud's in Quartzite. Stop in and say hello. If you want to be where there's virtually no roads, no power lines, no phones – head out to the Royal Rainbow. Blissful solitude and OPALS too! What a combination!!! We will be back! ☼