

# The Opal Express

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



Member

Member



Volume #31 Issue #02 February 1999



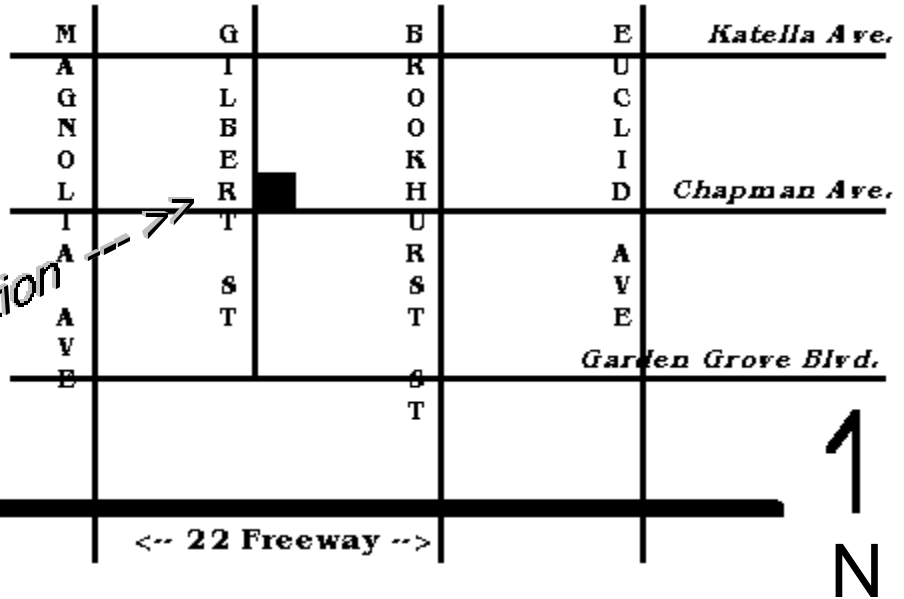
TO:



**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* →



**A Hearty AOS Welcome...  
to Our New (and Returning) Officers!**

*American Opal Society Officers*



<b>Carol Bova</b>	<b>President</b>	<b>(818) 845-8610</b>	<b>email bova@bovagems.com</b>
<b>Mike Kowalsky</b>	<b>Vice Pres.</b>	<b>(714) 761-4876</b>	<b>email mykowalsky@aol.com</b>
<b>Alan Farquer</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>(714) 537-0556</b>	<b>email nnf@earthlink.net</b>
<b>Jim Pisani</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	<b>(562) 948-6374</b>	<b>email vulajim@gte.net</b>
<b>Russ Madsen</b>	<b>Editor</b>	<b>(562) 425-9788</b>	<b>email 76550.1366@compuserve.com</b>



# In Memoriam

RICHARD BARNETT, owner of Barnett Opal Mine in Opal Canyon, Kern County, California passed away January 8, 1999. Richard was well known among California opalholics who visited the Barnett Mine. Always congenial, his hearty laugh regularly echoed from the opal bearing hillsides. He was known and will always be remembered for his helpfulness and encouragement to rockhounds. Richard was an accomplished opal cutter who spent many years at the Virgin Valley before opening the Barnett Mine to public digging. A world class gem opal - the Mojave Flame - perhaps the finest opal in his collection of stones found at Opal Canyon was a featured stone at the American Opal Society Opal & Gem Show in 1997. Richard is survived by his two sons and daughter, and was interred next to his wife of many years, Shirley, at Hillcrest Memorial Park to the east of Bakersfield, CA.

On a personal note, over the past ten years, Jane and I spent many weekends at Opal Canyon digging with Richard, Shirley and the many fast friends with whom we shared our love of the desert and opals. I often told them how special it was, being permitted to enjoy this wonderful activity and that getting to dig at the Barnett Mine was like getting to play in God's flower bed. Thank you once more and...

God Speed, Richard



## OPAL EXPERTS PLEASE READ

The Opal Society is looking for a few good speakers - Symposium Speakers to be precise. There are many opal experts among the AOS membership and we want to invite any of you who may have a topic or presentation to please call or write now as we are beginning to lay the ground work for the Opal Symposium at the 1999 Opal and Gem Show.

Are Your Dues Due Now? PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS your label shows the current month/year your dues are DUE

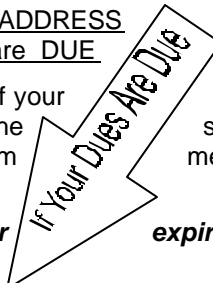
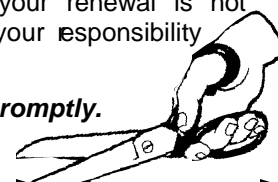
**Renewal Grace Period** of two months will be provided. If your issues of the newsletter. Please note however that as the received you will be **AUTOMATICALLY** dropped from to assure your dues are current.

*Please help us make this work by watching your Thanks!*

LABEL or the membership roster if you are listed. If NOW. If the date is older, your dues are **overdue.**

dues are due now you will receive two additional system is now set up, if your renewal is not membership thereafter. It is your responsibility

*expiration date and renewing promptly.*



## DUES RENEWAL FORM

(membership renewal form rev. 1/1/98) d:\ameropal\news\forms\dues\_due.pub



**American Opal Society, Inc.**  
P.O. Box 382  
Anaheim, CA 92815-0382

**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)
- 2) **CALIFORNIA & USA \$20.00**  
(all addresses outside local area counties)
- 3) **FOREIGN \$30.00**  
(all addresses outside USA)

\*\* **\$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.

(if yes, please sign or initial here) \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

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

**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.]

(if yes please sign or initial here) \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

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

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.

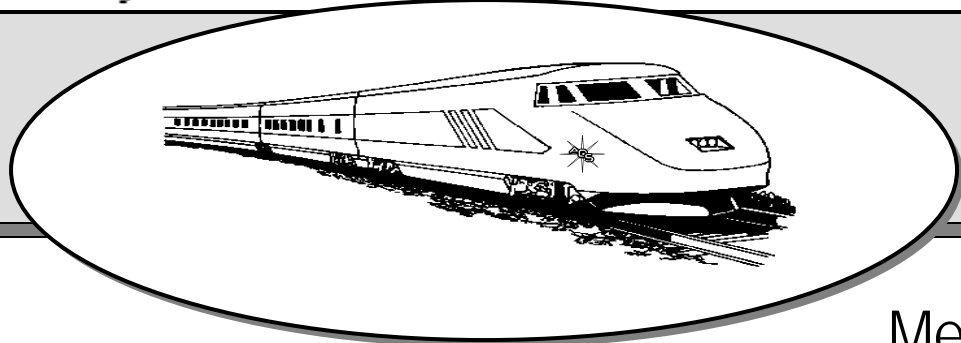
**Please indicate any name or mailing address changes**

# The Opal Express

LAPIDARY FORUM

Published  
monthly  
by the  
American  
Opal  
Society

Volume 31, Issue 02



## Mexican Jelly Opals

### President's Message from Carol J Bova

Becoming President of the American Opal Society at this point in its history, feels something like jumping aboard a train as it moves out of the station. As an organization, we are already in motion, and we are going to keep on moving forward, gaining momentum as we go! Not with the force and blast of rockets, but with the easy sure motion of the past propelling us to the future.

The AOS leadership structure has been set up in a very wise way. When officers complete their term, they are still members of the Board for another two years. In this way, their knowledge and experience is shared and passed along. **Wes Roth**, our newest former president, has graciously agreed to be the **1999 Show Chair**. One of my goals will be to quickly identify the year 2000 Show Chair so that person can train with Wes this year. We deeply appreciate the time and effort Wes (and wife Frann) have put into his presidency.

**Pete Goetz**, who moves from the Secretary's seat to a Board Member's, has done a fine job of maintaining the correspondence of the Board and the AOS in spite of a difficult work schedule. He has gone out of his way to share insights and new approaches that have helped us through some interesting times. He was also there pitching in at the Opal Show, and has been handling the mailing of the door prizes. Thank you, Pete, for your work and ideas.

**Bob Dixon**, our Librarian, remains on the Board, and also has taken on the role of Hospitality Chair. He will meet and greet new members and visitors at meetings and make sure they feel com-

(continued on Page 5)

By Noel Rowe

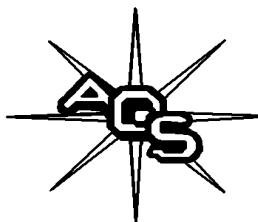
*(This article written in response to an inquiry excerpted below, first appeared in LAPIDARY DIGEST #183 and is reprinted here with NON-commercial reprint permission from both the author and Hale Sweeney of Lapidary Digest)*

**[INQUIRY: I recently acquired several Mexican jelly opal cabs...I looked up what we had in the Archives...but the information in that file was not anywhere near complete...(any) advice on orienting, cutting, polishing Mexican jelly opals?]**

For information on locations & mining techniques for Mexican opal check out the October 1998 issue of Rock & Gem. There is an excellent article by Bob Jones on Queretaro opal, which is the main region for Mexican opal.

The opal locals were known by the Aztecs who

(Continued on page 3)



### DATES TO REMEMBER

NOTE Special Meeting Date  
Thursday  
February 18th 7PM

Board of Directors Meeting Monday  
February 15th 7PM

### 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. ☼

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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# Mexican Jelly Opals

*(Continued from page 2)*

called it "quetza-litzle-pyolliti". According to Frank Leechman in "The Opal Book", it first came to Europe in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. The opal mines at Queretaro were discovered by a peon working on the plantations of Hacienda Esperanza in 1855 but mining did not begin in earnest until Don Jose Maria Siurob opened the "Iris" mine in 1870.

Queretaro is located about 160 miles by road northwest of Mexico City. The mines are open quarries. The opal occurs in rhyolitic rock, filling cavities in the rock, usually completely filled cavities although occasionally opal will be found floating loose in some cavities. It is mined by being blasted from the hillside with explosives. The resulting boulders are then broken up by hand to free the opal. Other lesser localities mentioned in the references I have are at San Juan Del Rio & Tequesquipan both of which are approximately sixty miles east of Queretaro, Zimapan and Vila Seca, northeast of Mexico City in the state of Hidalgo.

As far as polishing Mexican Jelly opal goes, I am not a professional cutter, but I have been cutting opals for about 30 years & have found a method that works well for me. If you are going to be successful with cutting Mexican Opal you need to be aware of a couple of characteristics common with the material. Mexican opal is very heat sensitive, it often has a higher water content than its Australian cousin, it can be somewhat brittle. Before cutting a Mexican jelly I usually leave it out of water for a couple of weeks to make sure it is stable enough to cut. Once I am convinced a piece is cuttable, I try to do as much of the preforming as I can without dopping the stone

When I'm ready to dop, I paint the side to be dopped with clear nail polish & allow that to dry. Than slowly warm the stone in the oven to about 100 degrees F. (no more than that). When the stone is warm take a dop with hot wax and press it to the stone. The nail polish will provide a strong bond with the dop wax, I have yet to lose a stone off of the dop using this method. For shaping the stone I work with silicon carbide belts on an expandable drum. I don't like grinding wheels because of the shock to the stone and I do not use diamond belts because they cut too fast. I do any preforming on a broken-in 100 grit belt, shaping on a 220, 400, 600 then on to a well worn resin belt with 50,000k diamond spray for final polish. Everything is worked very wet until the final polish. Use light pressure through all stages.

For polishing I use a medium pressure and keep the stone

moving to avoid getting it hot. If the resin belt starts to grab too much, add a drop or two of baby oil or other light mineral oil. If you see any kind of scratches under 10x magnification, the belt is either contaminated or not broken in well enough. Before polishing soft opal with a resin belt I usually polish a couple of agate cabs to break it in.

Heat is probably your biggest enemy when working with Mexican Jelly opal. KEEP IT COOL! One other item to note, occasionally you'll run across a piece of jelly which seems to have kind of a diffuse play of colors. Hold it up to the light, so the opal is between your eye & the light. You may have a piece of "Contra Luz" opal. It will come alive with color when viewed through transmitted light, similar to "Iris" agate only much more intense. Contra Luz should be faceted rather than cabbed. It makes a truly amazing gem. Every cutter has his or her own methods, but the above methods have worked well for me.

Hope this helps, Noel ☼

(from lapidary digest #183 12/6/98)



## Letter to the Editor

*(The following was received via email; if anyone has comments please call or write me, or you may send responses directly to Ms. Azulai at the email address shown below)*

Hello,

I'm sorry to intrude your email.

I'm an information professional from Israel and I'm seeking to find information on the process of dehydrating opal (Cacholong opal or "mother of pearl" opal) and re-wetting it with essential oils, water etc. I did not find any information about this on the net, as of yet.

Can you be kind enough to give me a lead of any sort?

Thank you so much for your time.

Regards,

--

Karen Azulai

InfoTracks

mailto:saharfam@green.co.il

http://www.infotracks.co.il/eindex.html ☼



**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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E-mail 76550.1366@compuserve.com  
(Deadline for items: 15th of the month prior to each issue)

# The McCondra Report

By Barbara McCondra

## "The No-No-Topic"

There is a word only softly and furtively whispered in the opal vendor's world---the word is cracky. Unstable, crazed, opal is an oft-avoided topic although we all know it exists. We all have a drawer with our cracky chunks of rough or our crazed cabochons. We hide them away to not be reminded of most opal cutters' fear. I was cleaning out some of my workshop drawers and struck one little petri dish holding four magnificent, brightly twinkling gem opals. They were my top specimens of my (said in a whisper) cracked opal. One cabochon each of four opal fields, Australian sedimentary formed opal fields. Mehi, Emu, Gravel Pit, and Smith's-----all produced some stable opal but a large percentage proved to be unstable even though they were all in a sixty mile radius of Lightning Ridge. Emu and the Gravel Pit both produced very stable gem opal but if the opal was cut with even a hint of matrix (a sludgy looking potch) attached, it was sure to craze. The Mehi often had a yellowish tinge that because the pattern and fire was so intense, buyers bought anyway much to their disappointment. Not all of Smith's Rush was cracky either. However it was very gray material and most buyers on the field have paid half or less per carat than they would have if the opal were on rich glassy black. Certain gray opal has a tendency towards being unstable so buyers paid less for the gamble. Every opal field area has its poor stability areas often chalked up to the depth it was mined but that was disproved when Emanuel Christianos went deeper than a deep cracky level and found great hard, stable opal. I have found that often when the rough opal tasted salty, some was prone to crazing. Any murky looking opal is suspect. Opal with ginger whisker or gypsum stain doesn't seem to hold up well.

Percentages of stable versus unstable change depending upon whether the opal was sedimentary formed as in Australia's Great Artesian Basin or of volcanic formation as in Mexico, the U.S. and Canada -- with sedimentary formed being the most stable and why 95 percent of the world's opal is provided by Australia.

This is a world that is accepting more and more the treatment of gems; i.e.: oiling and heating sapphires and emeralds, irradiation, heating of tanzanite to turn it purple, filling diamonds, growing rubies, emeralds and opals in the laboratory, and other enhancements. Andamooka black treated matrix is commanding great prices, doublets and triplets and inlay are an enhancement of opal with a black backing. So of course experimentation in the area of stabilizing opal is rampant although somewhat secretive.

Soaking cracked opals in epoxy or resin or glass fillers is the most common method. I had a Chinese jeweler whisper that I should soak uncracked opals in hydrochloric

acid for three weeks to greatly improve its fire. I am previewing the experimental notes and findings that a couple of fellows who used to mine in Virgin Valley have given me in order to write an article for Rock and Gem on the subject of opal stabilization and improvement of color and the HEALING of cracks. That's right, healing them by reversing the chemistry of crazing to grow opal in the cracks through the reversal of ionic exchange. Most of the experiments have been with Virgin Valley opal which has often amazed its owners by becoming an opal with red and more in it as the years pass: (opal which) when it was originally mined showed no trace of red fire. I provided my friends with some Mehi opal both rough uncracked and severely crazed cabochons with which they have had great success in healing most of the cracks but not all. At present the fellows are working on turning potch into fire! Oh my, oh my. Are they the first? Is the process perhaps being worked on by the Chinese who bought 20 millions of dollars worth of Mehi opal in the rough for a greatly discounted 3 million? Hmmm. Food for thought. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. May the New Year bring you many carats of top grade opal!!! ✨

From Outback Report December 1998

Most of the experiments have been with Virgin Valley opal which has often amazed its owners by becoming an opal with red and more in it as the years pass



## ITEMIZATION

**ITEM: February Meeting Date Changed to** Thursday February 18th to accommodate members who will be in Quartzite or Tucson during the regular meeting week. ✨

**ITEM: February Guest Speaker to be Mike Kowalsky.** Mike will complete his series of talks on traveling in Australia. Mike's final stop will be Coober Pedy with slides, pictures, and video, the beginning of Opal. Come share the traveling! Expect to hear stories about Quartzite too. Preliminary reports say it's a buyer's market. So if you get this in time, head on over and see what you can find! ✨

**ITEM: LIBRARY ITEMS MISSING!** In a recent inventory of the AOS library Bob Dixon noted several library items are long overdue. Please check your shelves -- especially for videos as (5) are checked out. The library operates on an honor system. We need your cooperation. Thanks for attending to this ASAP. ✨

**ITEM:** Bob Dixon is looking for someone to do data input for a catalog of library items. ✨

**ITEM:** We need a representative who will attend the Anaheim Arts Council as an AOS representative. Interested? Please contact any board member by phone, email, or at

(Continued from page 2)

portable and welcomed. This is something he's been doing extremely well, and I still remember his warm handshake from my first meeting. As Librarian, Bob manages the flow of information resources to and from members. The AOS collection of books, reprints, and videos is unique and contains a wealth of information on opal, lapidary and other related topics. If you haven't checked out the Library index, talk to Bob! Even if we don't tell you each month, we are grateful for your tireless work and warmth, Bob.

I'll tell you all more about your Board and Officers in the coming months, so you understand how all these different people come together, each with unique point of view and each with the shared love of opal and desire to share the American Opal Society's collective knowledge with the world.

We have urgent business in the months ahead. The Board is actively working to relocate the Workshop since our partners in the space have acquired a new shop and will be moving. Our 1998 Show was successful, but impacted by the change of date of the Pomona Show to the same weekend as ours. We have been assured by that Show's organizer, that this was the result of a specific circumstance and will not happen again this year. So it is essential that this year's Show be the best ever. New ideas and new projects will continue to evolve and develop.

One of those projects has already been defined: the building of new display cases so the AOS can participate with our opal exhibit in more gem and mineral club shows. I'd like to invite anyone with carpentry or woodworking skills who'd like to help, to call, write or email!

There are many more to thank for their advice and service, but for now, thank you to every one of the members of the American Opal Society, here in California, across the United States, and worldwide. Without you, there is no AOS. With your strength, knowledge, and support, we will continue to grow and flourish in celebration of our favorite gemstone, opal, and in our friendship with each other. To the members yet to be, "All Aboard!" Our destination is the end of this century with the American Opal Society as a shining example of what a gem or mineral society can be. Together, we can make it happen!

Looking forward to our future together,

Carol



*"Diamond Jubilee of Gems"*  
CFMS 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Show & Convention  
June 18, 19, 20, 1999

Do you have any plans for the middle of June in 1999? A suggestion and an invitation to the 60th Annual Show and Convention of the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies is tendered by the hosts, the Mother Lode Mineral Society.

FOR APPLICATIONS FOR ADVANCED REGISTRATION FORM REGARDING RV CAMPING, ACCOMMODATIONS, MAPS, BANQUET AND EDITORS' BREAKFAST & MEETING: CONTACT YOUR FEDERATION DIRECTOR or Bill Meadows, 308 San Juan Dr., Modesto, CA 95354 (209) 848-2709

## 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.**

### February 1999

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						

## 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.

# HELP WANTED

## PLEASE READ – YOUR CLUB NEEDS YOU

The positions listed below are presently open and we are seeking volunteers to fill them. Please see what you can do for your club!

**1) SECRETARY** (FILLED) (thank you Jim)

**2) PROGRAM CHAIR**

-this position involves making contact with and scheduling guest speakers and preparing a short article for the newsletter describing upcoming events.

**3) MEMBERSHIP BADGE COORDINATOR**

-this position involves taking blank badges to the engraver and mailing finished badges when ready.

**4) REFRESHMENTS CHAIR**

-arrange for or bring refreshments to monthly meetings. Costs are reimbursed by the club.

**5) DATABASE MANAGER**

-this position involves monthly input of renewal and new membership information, input of info regarding additions to the bibliography of the club's library and preparing mailing labels for the newsletter.

**6) DOOR PRIZE CHAIR**

-this is a new position and will involve arranging for door prizes donated by members which may be raffled or given away to those in attendance at monthly meetings.

**7) WOODWORKER / CARPENTER**

-this position will involve construction of new cases for club opal displays to be shown at a variety of locations primarily other club shows.

**PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE, if you are skilled in any of the above we NEED your help. If you are not skilled and have a big heart – volunteer anyway, we'll figure something out! A number of people have been doing significantly more than their fair share of the work to the benefit of all members of the club. Let's see if we can even that burden out a bit.**

**TO VOLUNTEER:** Please contact any board member at meetings or by phone, or email.

## TABASHEER OPALS

by Barr L. Doty, ISA, GG

Opal is the only gemstone found on earth to date that is produced from sources within the animal and vegetable kingdoms in addition to being formed geologically. Female mosquitoes produce opal to sharpen the needlelike piercing organs located in their proboscises. Vegetable opal is found in diatoms (Fuller's earth and tripoli), in stinging nettles, again to maintain sharp points, and in bamboo.

**Tabasheer**, or tabashir (Hindi, from Persia) opals are unique in the major division of silica stones known as "opaline silica" because they are one of the three known opals originating from a vegetable source. They form in the nodes (joints) of the living plant subfamily Bambusoideae (bamboo) which occurs in Myanmar (*formerly* known as Burma), the East Indies, India, South America, and China.

Damaged joints of this bamboo may secrete a hydrated form of silica which, when dry, forms translucent white to opaque bluish nodules. These nodules may exhibit the phenomena known as "orient", a faint, iridescent effect - typical in pearls. The alternative name of **pearl opal** is attributable to this nacreous appearance. Indeed, these lime stones resemble seed pearls and are frequently used in Chinese jewelry.

Tabasheer opals are highly porous and "water-hungry" which causes them to stick firmly to one's tongue until they become saturated. A counterpart to this property exists in the mineral kingdom of opaline silicates known as cachalong, or cacholong opal, often confused with hydrophane opal. This affinity for liquids by tabasheer opals was put to use during previous ages for the purpose of drawing out venom from snake bites, hence the name **snakestone**. Similarly, it was used to extract curare from wounds inflicted by the poisoned arrows and darts of South American tribesmen. Incomplete records indicate that tabasheer opal was also valued in the East Indies as a medicine.

**Chinese opal** appears in print as a misnomer for tabasheer (vegetable) opal, white chalcedony and moonstone.

NOTE: Please contact me if you have any additional information regarding this unusual opal or know where specimens may be obtained.



### *Advertisement*

GREAT DEALS ON ROUGH AUSTRALIAN OPAL AND CUT STONES. Great value rough opal, very stable, all price ranges. White base to multicolor crystal. Rough stones have not been picked over. Stable cut stones from all fields, all price ranges, all grades. Dealers, jewelers, hobbyists all welcome. (818) 785-7394 or write to: LAND OF WONDER, Eric Scott, P.O. Box 261142, Encino, CA 91426-1142



**HAPPY  
VALENTINE'S  
DAY !!**

## Carvings by Harriette

Harriette Breitman

One of a Kind Fine Jewelry

Designer of Wearable Art

Available for commissioned design and fabrication of custom "One of a Kind" jewelry and sculpture. People, animals or crests can be carved directly from photos in a wide variety of gem materials.

I began my career in 1973 as a graduate gemologist and designing jeweler working in gold, sterling, fine silver and precious gems.

I am a lecturer on carving and sculpture techniques and teach the fundamentals of gem carving at one-day workshops or in private lessons.

To reach me please call (310) 204-3513

Individual or Group Instruction  
On Sculpting and Carving Techniques

Learn How to Turn a Stone into  
A Unique Work of Art

# What's

Calendar of Upcoming Events  
Dates and Locations of Shows

**Feb 3 through Feb 13** Pueblo Inn/Four Points Hotel 350 S. Freeway, Tucson, AZ

**Feb 3 through Feb 13** MARTIN ZINN EXPOSITIONS Executive Inn Hotel 333 W Drachman; Ramada Inn 1601 N. Oracle Rd;

**Feb 12 – 13 9AM-5PM Feb 14 9AM-4PM** Wickenburg G&M Soc Cmnty Ctr, 160 N. Valentine, Wickenburg, AZ

**Feb 12 – 14 10AM-10PM Gem & Mineral Bldg** Riverside County Fair and Nat'l. Date Festival, Indio Fairgrounds, Gem & Mineral Bldg, Indio, CA

**Feb 27 – 28 10AM-5PM** Del Air Rockhounds, Sierra Pelona Rock Club, VIP G&M, Woodland Hills Rockchippers, Valley Plaza Rec Ctr, 11240

**Mar 6 10AM-6PM Mar 7 10AM-5PM** Monrovia Rockhounds Masonic Temple 204 W. Foothill Blvd. Monrovia, CA

**Mar 6 – 7 9AM-5PM** Ventura Gem & Min Soc.

**Mar 13 10AM-6PM Mar 14 10AM-5PM** Pasadena Lapidary Soc. San Marino Masonic Temple, 3130

**Mar 20 10AM-6PM Mar 21 10AM-5PM** Santa Clara Valley G&M Soc. Santa Clara Co. Fairgrounds. 344 Tully Rd., San Jose, CA

**Mar 27 10AM-6PM Mar 28 10AM-5PM** San Diego Min & Gem Soc. Al Bahr Shrine 5440 Kearny Mesa, San Diego, CA

**Mar 27 10AM-6PM Mar 28 10AM-5PM** South Bay Lapidary & Min Soc. Torrance Rec. Cntr. 3341

**Mar 27 10AM-6PM Mar 28 10AM-5PM** North Orange County Gem & Min La Habra Club House, 200 W. Greenwood, La Habra, CA

**Mar 27 9AM-6PM Mar 28 9AM-4PM** Mojave Min Society Boron High School Multipurpose Rm, Boron, CA



A Series of Articles in LAPIDARY DIGEST #195 discusses...

### Saleability of Opals with Imperfections

(Mark Greenbaum writes in part) First off, whatever the buyer will pay for is salable...I view opal values based on Paul S. Downing's book, "Opal Identification and Value". I recommend reading his book thoroughly to gain a knowledge of what is expected in opals (retail, wholesale, or for collecting)...Freeforms have a strong deduct of value due to the nature of having to custom make settings to fit them.

Greenbaum goes on...Backing of opals, immediately changes the playing field (as well as the color if backed with non-transparent, or dark colored materials)...Normally, the backs of opal cabochons should be free of chips, nicks, or inclusions. These first two characteristics especially at or near the edge of the stone. Note: anyone who has tried to prong set, or bezel set a chipped stone will attest to this. The third is not as important, unless the flaw appears to the front of the stone.

The initial question which prompted these comments regarded how to cut irregularly shaped rough. Another writer, mark Williams, offered the following...As to the backs of the cabs...The main concern is to get all of the sharp edges rounded out...Unevenness of the back can be worked around by a good goldsmith (They "build up" underneath the stone with various materials.)

Mark continues...I once had an opal that I cut from a 30\$ jar of gray nobbies that had outrageous fire. It turned out more like a carving than a cab. It was trapezoidal (kind of) shaped, with all kinds of dips and bumps on front and back. Figured I'd have to cut it into three smaller stones, eventually. Showed it to one of my Goldsmith buddies and he flipped over it, bought it as was and made a gorgeous pendant from it. ❁

(items excerpted from Lapidary Digest #195 January 17, 1999)



## ATTENTION DESERT ENTHUSIASTS

The Bureau of Land Management along with the cooperation of other State and Federal agencies .has plans to CLOSE the rest of YOUR DESERT!

The proposed plan would among other things:

- ? Close roads they deem unnecessary and limit camping along those roads
- ? Close desert washes across most of the desert
- ? Further restrict collection of firewood and recreation minerals
- ? Prohibit installation and maintenance of existing and future water sources for wildlife
- ? Allow for expansion of non-native wildlife to the detriment of native wildlife
- ? Acquire private lands through eminent domain
- ? Implement further restrictions, which are not supported by scientific data
- ? And much more ALL OF WHICH THE TAXPAYER WILL PAY FOR!

**\* We need action now! Please complete this questionnaire and mail it promptly to: \***

Mr. Ed Hastey 2135 Butano Drive  
State Director BLM Sacramento, CA 95825  
Phone (916) 978-4600 Fax (916) 978-4620

If you send in this questionnaire to the BLM, please notify **Desert Wildlife Unlimited, Inc. 4780 Highway 111, Brawley, CA. 92227, or Fax your questionnaire to (760) 344-4076**

Call Desert Wildlife Unlimited Inc., **(760) 344-1151** for more information or to schedule a presentation for your organization or group.

As a Desert Public Land enthusiast, I want it to be known that I participate in the following desert activities and I am opposed to the NECO plan (Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert) to restrict these activities:

**A CHECK MARK MEANS NON-RESTRICTION:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use Desert for plant and animal viewing      | <input type="checkbox"/> Use Desert for educational purposes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use Desert for sightseeing and photography   | <input type="checkbox"/> Use Desert for hiking               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use Desert for camping                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Use Desert for hunting              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use Desert for business                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Use Desert for other _____          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use Desert for other recreational activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Use Desert for rock hounding        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use Desert for all the above                 |  |

Name(Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Number of family members, who use the desert \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No \_\_\_\_\_ Fax No. \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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