

The Opal Express

American Opal Society
 P.O. Box 4875
 Garden Grove, CA 92842-4875



Member

Member



Volume #32 Issue #11 November 2000

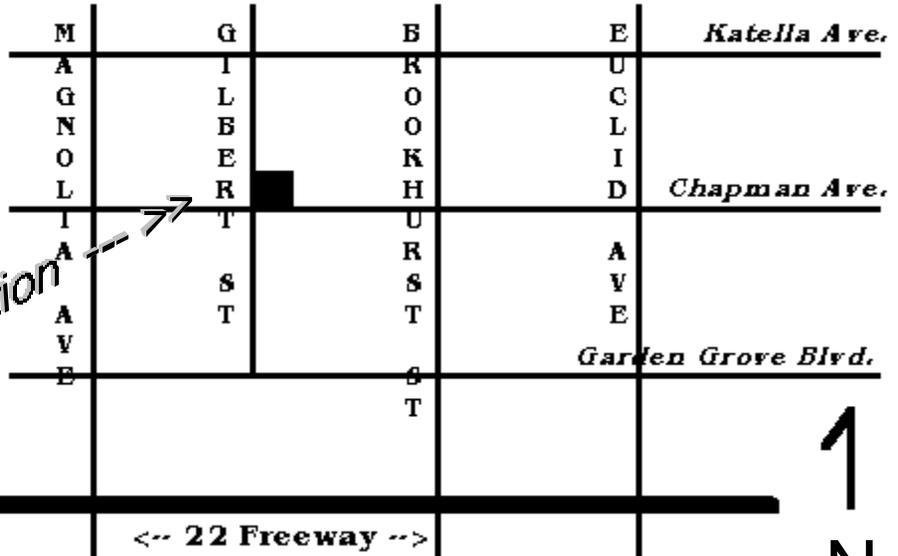
NOTE - NO General meeting in November-
--> AOS Opal & Gem Show Nov 4th-5th <--
- Annual Christmas Potluck will be
Thursday December 14th

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 →



!!! IT'S OPAL & GEM SHOW TIME !!!

American Opal Society Officers

Carol Bova	President	(818) 951-1402	email bova@bovagems.com
Mike Kowalsky	Vice Pres.	(714) 761-4876	email mykowalsky@aol.com
Allen Farquer	Treasurer	(714) 537-0556	email nnf@earthlink.net
Jim Pisani	Secretary	(562) 948-6374	email vulajim@gte.net
Russ Madsen	Editor	(562) 425-9788	email 76550.1366@compuserve.com

American Opal Society website <http://www.opalsociety.org>

!!! It's here !!!

!!! The Year 2000 American Opal Society !!!

!!! OPAL & GEM SHOW !!!

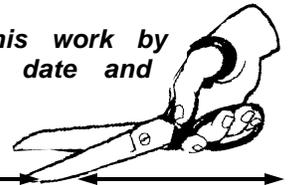
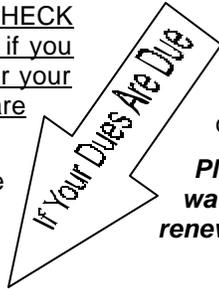
!!! Welcome one and all. We hope you enjoy the show !!!

Are Your Dues Due Now? PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL or the membership roster if you are listed. 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 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 not received you will be **AUTOMATICALLY** dropped from membership thereafter. It is your responsibility to assure your dues are current.

Please help us make this work by watching your expiration date and renewing promptly. Thanks!

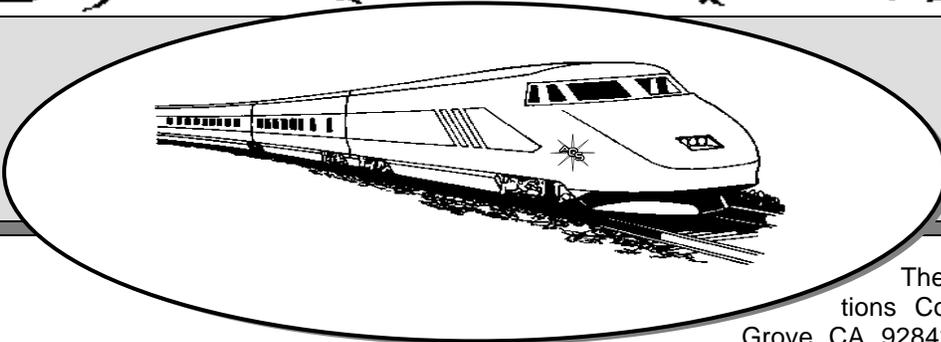


The Opal Express

NOVEMBER 2000

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monthly
by the
American
Opal
Society

Volume 32, Issue 11



The American Opal Society, Nominations Committee, P.O. Box 4875, Garden Grove, CA 92842-4875.

President's Message from Carol Bova

Show Time!

Opal excitement is building! We have long-time dealers returning and some new faces too. Mailings are out, emails on details are flying 'cross town, and we're looking forward to seeing you there!

Volunteers can still sign up to help at the registration desk, for Friday night set up and Sunday night tear-down, and the more donations we get for prizes, the more fun everyone will have at the show! So even if you're at a distance, and want to help support The American Opal Society...you can. A piece of rough, something finished, lapidary supplies, or something different that you'd enjoy getting as a door prize would be welcomed. But hurry! The show is November 4 & 5 at the Quality Hotel in Anaheim, at 616 Convention Way, at the corner of Harbor Blvd. See you there!

We will not have a meeting in November because we're putting all our November energy into the show.

Mark your calendars now: the December 14 meeting is our annual Holiday Dinner celebration. Regular meeting place. Watch for your December newsletter for the number to call to reserve your place and let us know whether you're bringing salad, veggie, or dessert. We'll let you know the main courses provided by AOS next month!

Nominations are coming up! Get ready to make your nominations for the upcoming elections! Watch next month for full details, or if you want to nominate someone for a Board of Directors or for an officer's position now, just send your nomination to:

Wishing a Good Show and a Happy Thanksgiving to you all...

Carol

Be Careful of Safe Deposit Boxes!

Last month, in my President's Message, I overlooked one note... be extremely careful of putting opals into safe deposit boxes. The BLM describes the lowest summer humidity in the Mojave desert as below 10%, but the humidity in safe deposit boxes areas is usually kept at one-half percent to safeguard paper or other delicate items! This can be devastating to opal. So this is one case where you definitely want to use a wet paper towel in a sealed plastic bag with your opals, and check it every few months to make sure it's still damp. ☼



DATES TO
REMEMBER

AOS OPAL & GEM SHOW
Nov 4th & 5th

(no general meeting
in November)

Christmas Party
Potluck
December 14th 7PM

Work Shop Information...

The LOCATION for the Opal Society workshop is the lapidary classroom at Walker Jr High School, 8132 Walker St., La Palma, CA 90623

Directions: (Choice of 3 Freeway approaches)

[1] Exit the 605 at Carson St and proceed east, or [2] exit the 5 or 91 Fwy at Valley View and proceed south, or [3] exit the 22/405 Freeways at Valley View and proceed north.

Walker Jr HS is on Walker St north of Lincoln Ave. It is on the east side of Walker between Crescent Ave. and La Palma Ave. Drive to the far back of the school to the Lapidary Arts classroom.

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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Advice for Rough Opal Buyers

(our thanks to Peter Brusaschi for his kind permission to reprint articles from his web site <http://opalmine.com/>) by Peter Brusaschi

(the following item from Peter Brusaschi has been edited but only slightly. While it is clearly Peter's solicitation to buy rough opal, it nevertheless seemed fitting to include this information now because many of you will be attending the upcoming AOS Opal & Gem Show. Reading Peter's suggestions and methodology may prove helpful to you either as a set of buyer's guidelines or as a contrast to your personal way of buying opal rough. It is hoped this article will be helpful to you in either case.

Also, there is a distinct parallel between the Opal Show and buying rough opal on the internet. As Peter mentions at the outset, the ability to look at a prospective parcel is a great boon to you as a buyer. Our show adds the ability to study a parcel "hands-on". -rgm)

Ordering rough on the net is the way to go, but because it is a new system, the procedure just has to be refined to meet all expectations. The great benefit of it is that you can take a look at what you are ordering, before you get it. However, I must say that photographing opal is not easy because of the amazing variations of color. The camera at times does not know what to do and the graphic has to be adjusted to approximate the actual stone. Sometimes the color is captured but the pattern is missed. The challenge is not to exaggerate or minimize. Some of the opal graphics I have seen on the net are extremely exaggerated and designed to "catch" a sale, but this only leads to disappointment. As far as possible I try to understate the color a little, and describe the differences by email.

Everyone has a different viewpoint as to what is good value and what is not, depending on your market and your experience as a cutter. Hopefully, the following will assist all to get as close to ex-

pectations as possible. ***If ever you are disappointed with a parcel, please let me know,*** and I will make every effort to make you happy. I want you to buy again and again, so, even if I loose money at times, I will make it up in the long run by good service. However because of the amount of inquiries I get, and the difficulty of locating the right parcel, I cannot always give the service I would like to. I apologize in advance for this, but of course this is the nature of the business. Opals don't grow on trees.

Rough Opal – buying suggestions: Please take a look at the following points designed to help you make the right decision.

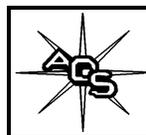
(1) Are you a new cutter, needing inexpensive parcels that you can practice on before venturing into the more expensive material? If so, give me an indication of your budget so that I can arrange the right parcel. This can be from \$50 up, but keep in mind that if the parcel is heavy, the freight can cost around \$30 (from Australia) or more. \$100 parcels are usually the least you would want to order...but if the material is light, I'm happy to fit your budget as much as possible.

(2) If you need experience in cutting, keep in mind the CD, "The ordinary bloke's guide to opal".

(please note, Peter has advised this CD is presently sold out. A new updated version will be available in the future. -rgm)

(3) If you are a professional cutter already, please give me an idea of the type of material

(Continued on page 5)



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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The Opal Express,
P.O. Box 4875, Garden Grove, CA 92842-4875
E-mail 76550.1366@compuserve.com
(Deadline for items: 15th of the month prior to each issue)

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS & Opal Show Guests !!!



ITEMIZATION

ITEM: OPAL & GEM SHOW NEWS

- ◇ Please see Page 7 for the calendar of Symposium speakers. We're looking forward to a series of fine new talks!
- ◇ We are pleased to welcome 22 dealers to this year's show. Hello again to returning friends/dealers, and a hearty AOS opalholics' welcome those of you joining us for the first time this year.
- ◇ Many demonstrators will also be joining us. Our thanks to you all as well!
- ◇ Show Dates are next weekend...Nov 4th and 5th !!! ✨

ITEM: NEW PO BOX REMINDER our new PO Box is open for mailings — American Opal Society, Inc., P.O. Box 4875, Garden Grove, CA 92842-4875. ✨

ITEM: AGTA Cutting Edge awards – Opals take honors. The November issue of *Lapidary Journal* reported winners of the year 2000 Cutting Edge Awards of the American Gem Trade Association. BEST OF SHOW and First Place in the Carving category both went to a stunning 131-ct. carving of Oregon opal titled "**Aurora Borealis**." Additionally, another fine example of Oregon opal received second place in the Objects of Art category. This beautifully sculpted 450-ct. Oregon opal was carved by

ITEM: NEW WHITE CLIFFS OPAL DISCOVERY Barbara McCondra shares this news from Australia for us in a Mini-McCondra Report. A new find of much opal has been hit in White Cliffs. The area is being referred to as Jurassic Park because many opal fossils are being found. Barbara notes the crystal is said to be quite spectacular.

Barbara also reported a new discovery has been made in Opalton, and that there are two new fields at Grawin, one called Mulga Rush, the other as yet unnamed. ✨

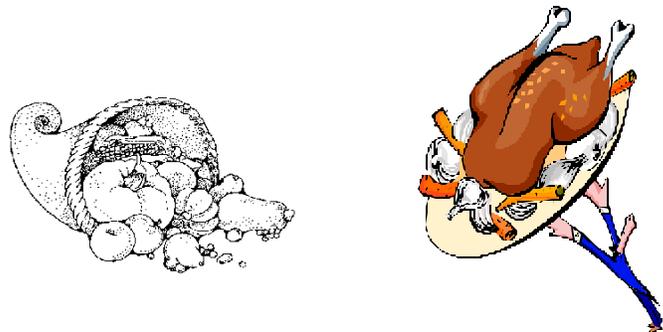
ITEM: NO GENERAL MEETING IN NOVEMBER Please remember that due to the Opal & Gem Show there will not be a regular AOS meeting in November. ✨

ITEM: VIRGIN VALLEY opal mines "Opal" Bob Halahan shares the following items about the history of opal mines in the Virgin Valley. Matheson and Dow were the original locators of the Opal Queen and Bonanza opal mines. Location certificates were filed in 1908. J. F. Heeney and Deb Roop filed on the Rainbow mine in Reno, NV in 1912. The Roebing opal was shown by the Dept. of Interior in Washington DC at the Smithsonian in 1919. It was reportedly found two years earlier. ✨



Advertisement

Alpine Opal Specimens & Cabs
Look for Whitesail Opal from B.C. Canada
at the AOS Opal Show
Featured in The Eclectic Lapidary
www.bovagems.com
Carol J. Bova



(Continued from page 3)

you like. If you let me know the **type of stones you prefer cutting. i.e. for carving, free forms, ovals, specimens, doublets, triplets, inlays,** etc. Or a few of both. Of course each parcel will provide stones for various categories, but if you let me know this detail I can send a parcel which features your main preference. Sometimes customers have ordered parcels that do not fit their preferences and have been disappointed. I would like to avoid this as much as possible.

(4) If you are ordering boulder opal for cutting or carving, remember that polishing the ironstone in the boulder is a tricky experience. You can experiment with it but it is different to polishing opal and can produce disappointing results. The CD discusses these details.

(5) Please indicate if you prefer to buy rough as it comes out of the ground so that you can enjoy the "challenge" of exposing the color. Keep in mind that this can be very risky. You can do very well, or you can loose money. If you like gambling, this is the way to go. But don't blame me if you loose your money. Usually I take the risk for you, expose the color, take a photograph, and either send you the graphic by email attachment, or post it on the net. I can then give you a commentary on the parcel as well to give you more details.

(6) Please indicate if you are used to buying opal by troy oz , by gram, by parcel lot, or by piece. I will try to give you these details.

(7) Apart from a very few customers who send money orders or bank drafts, I do all my trading with credit cards. If you would like to inspect the parcel before committing yourself, you just have to submit your credit details, using the encryption order on www.opalmine.com will hold this for safe-keeping until the parcel arrives. I would just love to be able to send the material without security but unfortunately; some dishonest people spoil it for all. If you have any questions about my reliability in this regard, please feel free to talk to any of the customers who's email details and com-

(Continued on page 7)

Workshop schedule

Be sure to check here for workshop schedule updates. The dates listed below are those available to the AOS in our WORKSHOP AT WALKER Jr HIGH SCHOOL. The shop can be opened to members on Wednesday nights. **Please continue to contact Stan McCall by calling him at Gems & Opals (714) 827-5680 if you plan to attend a shop session.**

November 2000

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

= November OPAL & GEM SHOW

December 2000

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		28	29	30
31						

 = Available Workshop dates

 = General Meeting date

 = Board Meeting date

WORKSHOP RULES

Please see calendar above 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 fees: effective immediately...SHOP USAGE FEE IS \$3 PER SESSION.
- ⇒ 5) 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.

What's happening???

Calendar of Upcoming Events
Dates and Locations of Shows


Nov 4 10AM-7PM Nov 5 10AM-4PM


AOS Opal & Gem Show
 Quality Hotel 616 Convention Way,
 Anaheim, CA

Nov 3 – 4 10AM-6PM Nov 5 10AM-5PM Palomar Gem & Min Club, Al Bahr Shrine Auditorium, 5440 Kearny Mesa Dr., San Diego, CA

Nov 4 – 5 9AM-5PM Kaiser Rock & Gem Club, California Steel Industry, 9400 Cherry

Nov 4 – Nov 5 9AM-5PM Indian Wells Gem & Min Society, Desert Empire Fairgrounds, 520

Nov 18 9AM-5PM Nov 19 9AM-4PM Oxnard Gem & Min Society, Oxnard Community

YOU'RE INVITED

!!! Please Plan to Attend !!!

CHRISTMAS PARTY POTLUCK

Please mark your calendars now for our annual Christmas Party potluck dinner. Friends and guests are welcome to join in the fun and holiday cheer!

Watch for meal planning details in the December *Opal Express*.

LOCATION: Our dinner will be at the regular meeting facility, Garden Grove Civic Women's Club on the north east corner of Chapman and Gilbert in Garden Grove.

DATE: The date is Thursday December 14th.

TIME: 7:00pm ✨



OPAL & GEM SHOW SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE

\$5 per session or \$15 for all 4

SATURDAY, NOV. 4

Noon Leslie Neff and Larry Hoskinson

◇ Finding Opal in Coober Pedy

2:00 PM Barbara McCondra

◇ Koroit

SUNDAY, NOV. 5

9:00 AM Tim Thomas

◇ Advanced Opal Cutting

Noon Dr. Walt Johnson

◇ Gem Identification



Advertisement

Rough Australian Opal

We have recently returned, with suitcases full of opal, from a buying trip to the Australian opal fields. Write or call for a free Price List/Newsletter. With inventory from Coobery Pedy, Lambina, Mintabie and Lightning Ridge we can supply you with rough opal from \$5.00/oz to \$9,000/oz.

Satisfaction guaranteed. You may return any unaltered parcel for a full refund.

The Village Smithy Opals, Inc.

We purchase our opals, mine direct, in Australia

PO Box 1334
 Billings, MT 59103
 406-651-4947
 Fax 406-255-8446
 vsmithy@prodigy.net
 VISA/Mastercard



Visit our webpage at
www.villagesmithyopals.com

California Federation of Mineralogical Societies
62nd Annual Show and Convention

GEM, JEWELRY & MINERAL SHOW

June 22, 23, 24, 2001
Fri. & Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5



**PASO ROBLES
ON BEST**

CALIFORNIA MID-STATE FAIR
2198 Riverside Avenue
Paso Robles, California

***Gems* Jewelry *Minerals* Fossils *Rocks*
Petrified Wood Youth Activities *Games*
Sharks Teeth 150 Exhibits *50 Dealers*
Lectures Demonstrations *Food & Beverage*
Campground Raffle *Much More**

ADMISSION: \$4.00 ADULTS-\$3.00 UNDER 18 & OVER 55-FREE UNDER 12 AND SCOUTS IN UNIFORM.

**HOSTED BY THE SANTA LUCIA ROCKHOUDS. CO-CHAIR BEA AND SHERM GRISELLE,
2401 NIDERER ROAD, PASO ROBLES, CA (805) 238-4366 E-mail thegrisses@tcsm.net**

Advice for Rough Opal Buyers

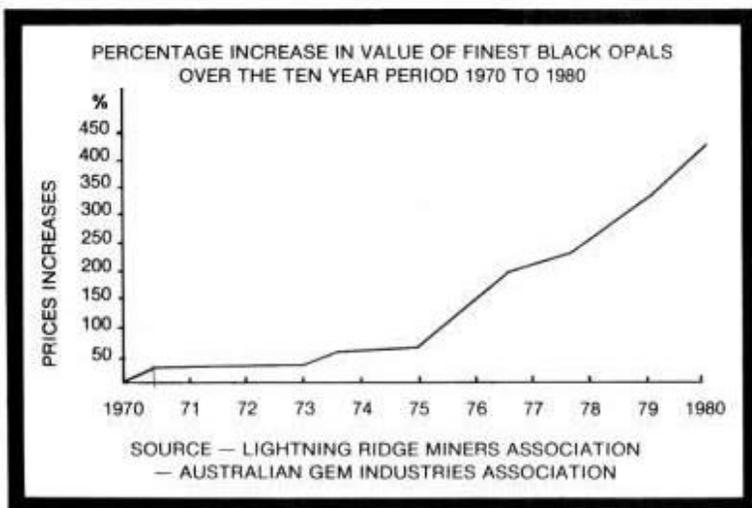
(Continued from page 5)

ments are listed in the **letters** section as you pan down to the bottom of the home page. I have another 20 of these recommendations not yet posted. Also note this summary posted in the 'order' section.

(8) Freight: If you want to be sure of delivery in a few days, spend up to \$50 for courier service (depending on weight). Or if really urgent for expensive parcels, \$80 for United Postal Service.

Otherwise, the normal \$20 covering post and insurance works well, and unless the post office is under pressure, you should get it in about a week.

Hope this information helps you to make a good rough buying decision. ✿



(The graph at left, from <http://opalmine.com/>, shows the rise in Lightning Ridge black opal prices through the decade of the 1970's. Thanks again to Peter Brusaschi for permission to reprint this graph and the accompanying ar-

ticle. -rgm)

Never engage in a war of
words with a man who buys
his ink by the barrel.

**- Samuel Clemens (Mark
Twain)**