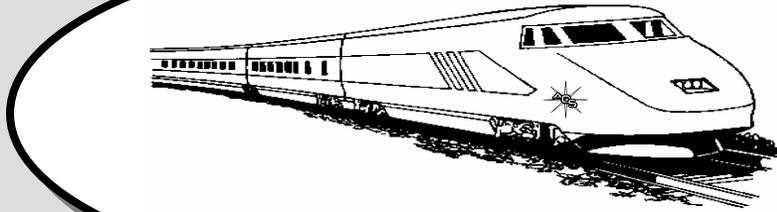


The Opal Express

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President's Message

By Gene LeVan

First be sure to come to another interesting opal meeting on 9/13/07 and meet opal people, show your gems you cut or have.

Second buy a Rock & Gem Magazine October 2007 OPAL, issue it has everything about current opals, with lots of great photographs.

Want to go mining for opal? Well this issue tells all about it. This mining is not for the light hearted person, it is hot and barren country and not easy to do. The rewards are a lot of luck to find good opal, many have spent a year or more and found very little, but others have made it worthwhile and their stories go on forever. You have to look at a lot of dirt to find that great stone. That is why the price of opal is high for the precious stones.

Buy the Rock & Gem magazine November 2007 issue to see my designer opal stones on the front cover and inside 1/2 page ad.

The Greeks thought opal was the tears of Zeus; ancient India thought opal was the Goddess of the Rainbow; and the Romans called it the child beautiful as love.

Well you can see opal has lots of mystery over time. For me this opal stone is always new surprising, precious, interesting and no two are alike.

See you are the October meeting.

Correction on Royal Rainbow Opal Mine

Suzy Berchtold, owner of the Royal Rainbow Opal Mine, contacted the AOS with a correction to last month's posting that the mine was open for business.

The correction is that there is no fee for camping. People can camp for up to 14 days free according to the BLM rules. Contact Richard Lee at: P.O. Box 113, Gerlach, Nevada, 89412

The Bowers Museum Field Trip – Sept. 23rd Gems! Colors of Light & Stone

The American Opal Society will hold a field trip on September 23, 2007, at the Bowers Museum to view one of the most important private gem collections in the US. We will meet in the museum parking lot at 12:30 pm and enter the museum at 1:00 pm. Please contact Jim Pisani at (714) 815-4648 or e-mail at editor@opalsociety.org if you plan on going. If we get enough people, we get a group discount.

The Bowers Museum is located at the corner of 20th & Main Streets in Santa Ana - one minute from the 5 freeway, (Main St. South exit) and just minutes from the 57, 55 and 22 freeways to the Museum.

Date & Time: Sept. 23rd, 2007 at 12:30 pm.

Address: 2002 North Main Street, Santa Ana, CA 92706

Phone: (714) 567-3600

Parking: All day public parking is available directly north of the Bowers Museum. Nearby metered and free timed street parking is also available.

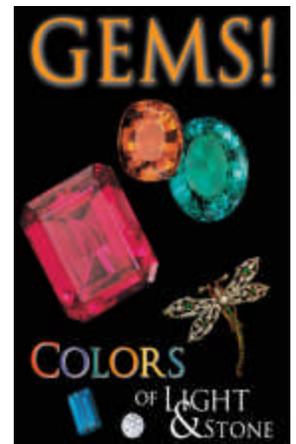
Here is the description of what we will be viewing:

The Michael Scott Collection, The most important private gem collection in the United States, with few rivals in the world outside of the royal families, the Michael Scott Collection is back at Bowers Museum and features even more luxurious pieces. **GEMS! Colors of Light and Stone** opens on June 17, 2007 for a year-long run in the new Anderson-Hsu-Tu Gallery.

GEMS! Colors of Light and Stone is the most important exhibition of colored gemstones, diamonds and gems as art ever shown in a U.S. museum," says Dr. Peter Keller, president of Bowers Museum, who is also a geologist and gemologist and who curates this exhibit.

In GEMS! Colors of Light and Stone you'll see most of the major gem species in every color and variety known. In addition, you'll see very rare examples of little known color varieties such as green tanzanites and "electric-blue" Paraiba tourmalines. It also includes examples of cut "collector" stones—those too rare to be used in the general jewelry trade; antique jewelry from the mid-19th to early 20th centuries; spectacular gem carvings, including those by German artists Bernd Munsteiner and Gerd Dreher; and the work of Seattle-based silversmith/contemporary artist, John Marshall.

From <http://www.bowers.org>



Opal Society Workshop

The American Opal Society's workshop will re-opened on Sept. 11th after being closed for the month of August. The shop is located at Ball Jr. High School and will occur every Monday from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. The school is located at 1500 W. Ball Road in Anaheim. If you are traveling east on Ball Rd. the parking lot entrance you need to use is just before the railroad tracks Room 37 is in the center of the campus.

Instruction will be given in cutting opal, wax models, lost-wax casting, fabrication, and setting stones. The workshop will furnish machines to cut and polish stones as well as a centrifuge for casting and a kiln for burnout. Please bring a roll of PAPER TOWELS with you for clean-up as the room is a science lab and needs to be kept spotless.

To attend, membership in the American Opal Society is a must due to insurance. A nightly fee of \$2 is asked to help keep the equipment in good running condition.

Please contact Pete Goetz at (714) 345-1449 if you have any questions.

Members Only Website Password

To log onto the website's members only area at: http://opalsociety.org/aos_members_only_area.htm type: Name: "member" and Password: "precious".

September Meeting

Opal Brightness Kit Workshop

For the September meeting, we will be holding an Opal Brightness Kit Workshop. Our goals for the workshop are as follows:

- Review and re-establish the appraisal criteria for judging opal brightness.
- Let members determine the brightness of their best opals.
- Create Opal Brightness Kits for individual members.
- Create Opal Brightness Kits for the AOS to sell.

Historically, valuing opal as a gemstone has always proven difficult. The American Opal Society was the first organization to provide a quantitative method of appraising opal. In 1972, the AOS created the American Opal Society Appraisal Form. This form allowed the evaluator to systematically determine an opal's value by judging a number of unique criteria. Each criterion would then be multiplied by a constant (determined by the current market conditions) and added to give a price for the opal. The original evaluation standard was created in 3-72, revised 7-82, and further revised 6-95.

The primary criteria for determining the value of an opal is the brightness of the opal. Due to the difficulty of determining a brightness of an opal from just looking at it, the AOS decided that that reference opals of known brightness would allow a side by side comparison to determine what the absolute brightness index was. Because of this, the AOS manufactured the Opal Brightness Kits to go along with the AOS Appraisal Form.

The opal expert and author Paul Downing retailed an opal brightness kit for a number of years. Paul states, in his books, "Opal Identification and Value", (first printed in 1992 revised in 2002), that the concept of producing his Opal Brightness Kits originated from the AOS kits of earlier years, which were no longer available. We hope to change that, starting with the general meeting this September.

Here's what we want members to do in preparation for the workshop:

- **Bring the brightest opals that you own.** The size doesn't matter. There are very few brightness level 5 opals out there.

We need a good sample for our judges to establish a reference from.

- **Bring in any chips or small opals** that have **good brightness** but are too small to cut stones out of that you are willing to donate to the society.
- If any of the older members have any of the **original AOS Opal Brightness Kits** or Paul Downing's kits, please bring them in for us to study or let us know who still owns them. All of the original kits that the AOS owned have disappeared over the years and we would like to see the original references.
- We will provide two 100 watt incandescent lamps that shine downward. We should have a few more. If you have any please bring them, along with an extension cord.

Here is the current AOS Opal Brightness Criteria:

Excerpt from the American Opal Society Appraisal Form

Color Intensity or brightness of color is the most important aspect in appraising opal. A very high intense green fire opal that can be seen across the room in subdued light will have much more appeal than a red predominant multicolor that can be barely seen at arms length. The judgment of intensity of the opal is to be made at arms length in a room of subdued lighting. The light source is incandescent, not florescent. If the opal is judged outdoors, use a shaded area in which to view the opal. Florescent lighting should not be used, as the colors reflected back from the light source are not true the red hues which are the most valuable tend to be lost and the greenish hues emphasized. If there is any doubt the next lower rating should be utilized.

1) VERY LOW This describes a stone, which must be looked at very carefully to see any color or brightness at all. The stone will appear dull and lifeless. The stone will need very bright light to show off any color and without bright light will show almost no color. With the opal held at arms length in subdued lighting the color pattern is barely visible to indistinguishable.

2) LOW This describes a stone in which the color can be seen without bright light, and you have no trouble distinguishing the colors. The colors will be present but the colors are sleepy and somewhat dull. Colors in a low intensity stone will almost extinguish in shadow, or many of the colors will extinguish and only one or two will remain. Color pattern distinguishable but no particular reflective brightness.

3) MEDIUM This describes a stone in which the colors are definite and clear. The colors do not extinguish in poor light. The colors are crisp and well defined and can be seen from some distance. The pattern is distinguishable to eye, with reflective brightness apparent.

4) HIGH This describes a stone in which the colors are distinct clear and well defined. The colors can be seen clearly in poor light. The colors will be extremely clear and vibrant and can be seen from a distance without diminishing in quality. The fire colors are very reflective, bright and clear.

5) VERY HIGH This describes only a very few stones. The colors must be vibrant and almost iridescent. The color will be so intense that they almost appear electric. The color will not diminish in low light and in fact they may glow with even more beauty in low light or shadow. The fire colors in this intensity rating are so bright they can be seen by someone on the other side of an average size room.

Revised - 9/9/2007

Simon King on the Himalaya Mine and Tourmaline

Simon King was our key speaker on the famous Himalaya Mine for the August general Meeting. Simon gave an excellent slide and video presentation of the mine, its gemstones, and the mining of them.

The Himalaya Mine has been one of the largest producers of tourmaline in the world and is located in



Simon King describing the discovery of a tourmaline pocket

Mesa Grande, in the back country of San Diego County.

Simon had some great photos of the opening of a gem pocket in the pegmatite in the mine. The gem pocket was located about 300 feet down and about a quarter of a mile from the mine entrance. From this single pocket, which was smaller than a cubic yard, they recovered over 70 pounds of precious tourmaline.

Simon brought a number of rare specimens and beautiful cut stones. Simon had samples of green, pink, bi-color, tri-color, watermelon (green outside, pink inside), the rarer reverse



Faceted Tourmaline from the Himalaya Mine in San Diego County and Sunstone from the Spectrum Sunstone Mine in Oregon

watermelon (green inside, pink outside), and rubellite, or red tourmaline. In addition to the tourmaline, there were tourmaline in matrix specimens that were one of a kind and museum quality. These specimens were a

combination of tourmaline, quartz, lepidolite, mica, and feldspar and were the envy of any serious collector. There was also a number of beautiful rough and cut sunstones from the Spectrum Sunstone Mine in Oregon.

Simon also described the filming of a Travel Channel TV show at the mine: ["The Best Places to Find Cash and Treasures"](#) (see

<http://travel.discovery.com/tv/cash-treasures/cash-treasures.html>). The crew was present when they excavated the gem pocket and filmed it. The show should debut this fall. Simon said that the producer of the show said that he is a natural on film. Stay tuned to see the beginning of a movie star!

Simon is an associate of Chris Rose, the owner of both the Himalaya Mine and the Spectrum Mine. Information on fee digging at the Himalaya Mine or the Spectrum mine can be found at <http://www.highdesertgemsandminerals.com>.

To make a reservation to dig for tourmaline at the Himalaya Mine tailings, call Simon at (619) 444-3731 or e-mail him at simonking1@cox.net.



A fantastic specimen of tourmaline on quartz. It's size is about 10 inches long.

Question about Black Opal

This is a good thread about opal evaluation from Gemology On Line that I thought was pertinent to the topic of our general meeting this month – The Editor
gem doc

Location: Aiken SC, Posted: Oct 21, 2006

I had a customer who brought in what she claimed was black opal. It was opaque with flashes of red, green and blue. It was cut in cylindrical shapes, drilled and strung in a necklace.

I have never seen opal cut like this. I looked at it through the microscope it appeared to be natural opal (no snakeskin affect). She claimed it came from Germany.

I told her it appeared to be real opal but could not verify for sure. Has anyone else run into material like this? And what is the value. I told her if it was black opal it would be worth significantly less than the translucent variety

Michael G.G., A.J.P., C.G.A. (Candidate)

ROM

Location: Southern California; Posted: Oct 21, 2006

Any chance of an image? Opal is very hard to value. If diamonds are 1 in difficulty, opal is at least a 10. There are many kinds of black opal, from Andamooka treated opal matrix to the genuine solid blacks from Lightning Ridge, Mintabe and occasionally other fields as well. And there are many grades of all those as well as many kinds of synthetics.

Matched cylindrical cuts make me suspicious of a synthetic or simulant material because natural opals almost never lend themselves to such cuts, especially in enough quantity to form a whole necklace. Germany as a source is interesting. Certainly many of the finest colored stones available worldwide are cut and sold in Idar-Oberstein.

If the beads are genuine black opal of high quality they will be worth many times more than light opal. But first we must find out what they are.

Rick Martin

brimsjewelry

Location: McDonough GA, Posted: Oct 21, 2006

Could it possibly be massive opal in matrix from Honduras? I've seen quite a bit of that around lately at flatly stupid asking prices. Most of it is pinfire. I doubt there would ever be very wide splashes of color.

Here is a pic of some on Ebay:

<http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=110026834131&category=3826>

Jason

ROM

Location: Southern California, Posted: Oct 21, 2006

So it's back on the market again! I recall the Honduran stuff from years ago. Most of it was usable only for doublets because it is too porous to take a good polish but some was intensely colored and could possibly be in-filled with epoxy. There's a similar type of material from Canada consisting of very bright specks of opal in a soft gray-black matrix.

It could also be some sort of ironstone opal -- I've seen beads offered in it lately and it can have a variety of matrix colors, from dark brown to virtually black. There are just too many possibilities to make a good guess until more information is available.

Rick Martin

LaShawn

Location: Reno, NV, Posted: Oct 23, 2006

Greetings One and All Boy OH BOY!!!!!! I just came back from the Registered Master Valuer Program's Three Day Seminar in Sacramento, CA.

Liz Burnett-Kuhns, GG, RMVP

EGL Canada, Vancouver Office

Liz was the Guest Lecturer and Instructor of the Main Course. Excellent Job Liz! Nancy Stacy was our Key Note Speaker at our Saturday Night Dinner. Nancy was Super!

The point is Nancy Stacy showed us a new SUPER Program called, "Opal Smart Chart". Adrian Smith developed this super in-depth Opal Grading Program and we got to see it in action first hand and it is the Cat's MEOW!!!!!!

<http://www.appraisertech.com/Smart%20Chart.htm>

If any of you are going to be appraising or working with Opal then this is by far the way to go!

Nancy Stacy is "I guess" going to be the one to get a hold of if you live in the US and you want a copy of this. You can also contact Thom Underwood at QLSS and see if he is going to handle and sell this handy dandy program.

<http://www.jewelry-appraisal.com/>

This is Nancy's Site for contact information.

Later

I'm ordering my copy today!!!!!!

High Sierra Gem Lab

La Shawn Bauer, GG , HighSierraGemLab@gmail.com

ROM

Location: Southern California, Posted: Mon Oct 23, 2006

LaShawn,

I've been using the Smart Chart for some time now. It's a very strong approach but there's something to consider.

I have a very close friend on the field at Lightning Ridge who is in a unique position to comment on this software. This person has informed me there are considerable differences between actual field prices and those used by the Chart, which was evaluated by miners' representatives before it was released to the public.

I don't want to say a lot more without this person's express permission but will comment that even accepting the software at face value it can be very tricky even if you're very experienced in opal grading. I've been working with precious opal for more than 30 years and believe I'm much more savvy about grading it than the average person. On several occasions the program has given me wildly different values for the same opal based on rather subtle inputs to the program's default questions. Ultimately I've had to say

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"That's silly" and override the program's results with what I know the market is for certain stones.

Overall the program is very well thought out and constructed. It leads a valuer through all the essential steps of grading standard types of stones found in trade and requires careful thought about each one. It's an excellent resource for the person who wants to learn about precious opal. But since real-world pricing is what you're ultimately concerned with I'd recommend some caution about it being the appraiser's end-all solution. I'll try to obtain further specific information I can post here.

Rick Martin

LaShawn

Location: Reno, NV, Posted: Oct 23, 2006

Greetings ROM and All of the Others

I guess I should have made the very big statement. I was talking about the process of educating the people who don't come across opals very often or need an organized method of doing a report as far as collecting the much needed information so the report will cover most of the bases.

As far as pricing using the pricing structure that is inside I have no idea. I would as an appraiser collect more than one data price from several sources before deciding on what the TRUE MARKET is for my area or for North America or whatever.

I just like the idea of being about to go in a very logical order of collecting the data on how to properly grade the opal so it can be fully described in one of my reports.

Maybe later Adrian can work in updates and such because opals due change in price due to certain market conditions and is never static or constant just like any other gemstone or precious metal on a daily, weekly, monthly or yearly.

Sorry I should have gone into further detail and explanation as to what really impressed me about the program .

Later

High Sierra Gem Lab

La Shawn Bauer, GG , HighSierraGemLab@gmail.com

ROM

Location: Southern California, Posted: Mon Oct 23, 2006

La Shawn,

I'm confused. You say the program was developed by Adrian Smith. Are we talking apples vs. apples?

My version was developed in Australia by Peter R. Evans and I bought it direct from Oz. I see that Evans is credited as the developer by the Appraiser Tech site but has Smith modified it in some way for American use?

Yes, I fully agree that the software is a very valuable and comprehensive way to investigate opal grading and to learn the new grading standards developed by the Gemological Association of Australia.

Despite the excellent overall quality of the software, there are a number of elements I hope will be improved over time in addition to the pricing matrix. Judging an opal's brightness - one of the most critical and experience-based aspects of valuation - is not presented as thoroughly as I'd like to see. There are others as well but the program is a tremendous accomplishment in my opinion. I'd like to offer some of my opals with independent appraisals but finding appraisers willing to take on the work (or those whose opal expertise I'd be confident in) has been a problem.

Rick Martin

valeria102, Moderator

Location: Eastern Europe, Posted: Oct 23, 2006

gem doc wrote:

Has anyone else run into material like this?

The description reminds me of a handful of rubs I have seen... It has been a while, though, I doubt they are any longer in my jeweler's shop in any form. They were not expensive by black opal standards. And quite large, block shapes - this strange opal sandwiched

between two layers of sandy skin that had not been rubbed away completely. Sure enough, it may be that between what the description gives tells me and what it should there is some random distance (double-blind review? 😊 LOL!).

The closest thing I could find online is this one below at: <http://firebirdgems.com/> (last catalog page, in the 'cut stones above \$200 category). It is not quite right though: the ones at the jeweler had sparse flecks of color sunk into pitch-black, semi-translucent base that looked like solid tar if anything.

I hope you do not mind my posting... I am not a gemologist, obviously... just happened to remember those unusual opals. I am sure they were not unique and more examples can be found for more reliable reference.

LaShawn

Location: Reno, NV, Posted: Oct 24, 2006

Sorry ROM I just took it as being developed by Adrian at Appraisal Tech since that is where I thought it was developed. My mistake!!!!

High Sierra Gem Lab

La Shawn Bauer, GG, HighSierraGemLab@gmail.com

ROM

Location: Southern California, U.S.A., Posted: Oct 24, 2006

La Shawn,

It was a sincere question. I noticed the cover on the DVD shown at the appraisal site seemed different than mine. I wondered if you were describing a program that had been modified from Evans's original.

Cheers,
Rick Martin

Barbra Voltaire, Site Admin

Location: San Francisco, Posted: Oct 24, 2006

Quote:

I hope you do not mind my posting... I am not a gemologist, obviously....

Valeria102, you always have the greatest posts, super informative, relevant content. I look forward to reading everything you have ever posted! We are very fortunate to have you as a member! There are many "gemologists" who don't hold a candle to your knowledge.

valeria102. Moderator

Location: Eastern Europe. Posted: Thu Oct 26, 2006

Blush 😊

Barbra, it surely feels great to have a place where to unload hints and ideas without fear of misleading or being sent into the corner. There aren't many places on the Net like this! From my side, the forum looks like the greatest gemology lab class. Add a hands-on section 😊, and this could be the best course yet!

Richard W. Wise

Location: Gemologist/gem dealer/author. Posted: Nov 12, 2006

Black opal cut into cylindrical shapes with no aligating. Send it to a lab. I saw some similar stuff, almost too good to be true and it wasn't. Sent it to GIA and it came back "synthetic".

Richard

Author: Secrets of The Gem Trade; The Gem Connoisseur's Guide
www.secretsofthegemtrade.com Try my new blog; GEMWISE:
<http://gemwiseblogspotcom.blogspot.com>

Mick

Location: Australia. Posted: Feb 15, 2007

From description alone I'd bet its treated Andamooka matrix opal. My grandfather was making cylindrical beads out of it since the 50's. The fact that it's black, opaque and looks real under a microscope all point to this.

Matrix opal from Andamooka is a microscopically porous opal material, basically where fine kaolinic clay and silicon dioxide saturated water have met, infused and hardened (more complex than that, but basically)

The treatment used is as follows:

- Cut the stone to desired shape/polish.
- soak the stone in a supersaturated sugar solution for 1 day
- remove the stone, let it dry for a day
- place the stone in near boiling concentrated sulphuric acid.
- repeat until sufficient darkness is reached.

Treatment darkens the stones white background to increase the contrast/strength of colours. Treatment is fairly permanent and can be repeated.

I have seen many people selling this stuff as black opal, I even met a guy that paid 2200 a carat for a stone and he didn't believe me when I said I would charge \$12 a carat for it. He sold it and the guy returned it to him this year in Tucson and was more than a bit pissed off. 😊

Having spent a lot of my younger years in Andamooka, I have had a lot of exposure to Andamooka opal types, so I guess I'm privileged but it still amazes me how many people think that treated matrix opal is solid black opal. To me they are as different as steak and peas.

After all that, I guess I can't tell without seeing it or a photo. All the best

Mick

www.all-gem.com

Location: Southern California, Posted: Feb 15, 2007

Mick wrote:

It still amazes me how many people think that treated matrix opal is solid black opal. To me they are as different as steak and peas.

Mick, I hope you don't think I made that mistake above! I've cut and treated a fair amount of Andamooka matrix myself and certainly don't consider it to be black opal, although I've often seen it sold as such. All I've seen has a distinctive appearance and no one familiar with opal should take it for the real thing.

Thanks for the info about the matrix beads. I've never seen it in that form but it's good to know it's out there.

Rick Martin

Website: www.artcutgems.com

Mick

Location: Australia,. Posted: Thu Feb 15, 2007

No implications there mate. 😊

I have seen noobs and graduated gemologists alike make the mistake with matrix opal. Just thought it was an option worth considering given the description.

The glass is always half full.

www.all-gem.com

winstone

Location: Dallas, Texas, Posted: Feb 27, 2007

The "opal smart chart" looks very similar to the "Gem dialogue charts by Howard Rubin, husband of Gail Lavine. I wonder? There are several books on opal prices, one must attend shows, check other jewelers, look at price guides, and examine the stones for cracks etc. Opal being a hydroscopic stone has water inside. Water expands to steam when heated, and expands to ice when cooled. Most other elements do not have these properties.

Prior to WWII a lot of opal came from Hungary. Those mines are closed now, but they did produce come unusual black opal. A picture would be nice.... Winstone

GG, CIA, contributor 16 CFR 23, paralegal, CAD/CAM design, Christian symbols, BFA'65 art-jewelry BSA'67 UTexas gemological illustration

ROM

Location: Southern California, Posted: Feb 27, 2007
Precious opal is an amorphous hydrous (water-containing) silicate and is not hygroscopic. The only opal that attracts water is the variety called hydrophane.

I routinely heat expensive opals above the boiling temperature of water and below its freezing point without harm while attaching/removing dops while cutting. It's the speed with which heat or cold is applied that matters. Rapid heating/cooling of nearly any gem material beyond its coefficient of expansion will result in breakage. Water content has nothing to do with it.

winstone wrote:

The "opal smart chart" looks very similar to the "Gemdialogue charts by Howard Rubin, husband of Gail Lavine. I wonder?

You wonder what?

I have both and they aren't remotely similar except that both deal with grading gemstones. One is on CD-ROM (opal), the other is a purely paper product. The Smart Chart is devoted entirely to quality-grading and valuing precious opal and represents an important development for the most difficult of all gem-grading/valuing tasks.

Rubin's work is for color-grading transparent faceted gems. It has relatively little application in grading precious opal.

I have in my personal library nearly every important book ever published about precious opal. There is no reference to black opal from Hungary in any I can find. The Hungarian opals are historic with documented mining going back as far as the time of the Huns. This was the opal of the Roman elites.

Black opal was new to the gem market when it was discovered at Lightning Ridge, New South Wales, Australia in the late 1800s. The only other place it occurs in any quantity is the Virgin Valley region of Nevada, U.S.A. Were it stable and usable in jewelry, the Nevada black opal would probably be the world's finest. But it contains too much water -- as a condition of its formation, not because it's hygroscopic -- and it nearly always crazes when exposed to the air.

Stresses are placed on the opal's structure as excess water is too-rapidly evaporated and it cracks. Some Nevada opal stabilizes under the right conditions. Pieces that are occasionally buried in the mine tailings are often found to be stable after "curing" very slowly over a number of years as the tailings dry. As I write I'm not aware of any foolproof method to stabilize this magnificent opal, but many have tried and will continue to experiment.

Rick Martin

Website: www.artcutgems.com

winstone

Location: Dallas, Texas

Posted: Wed Feb 28, 2007 1:59 pm Post subject:

Hydroscopic is a term that one of my teachers used to impress on us the nature and dangers of Texas weather. In Texas in the morning there can be a light freeze and in the afternoon of the same day temperatures approaching 110 degrees. Texas women love their opals and being used to dramatic temperature changes discover in most cases that their opals

break in their mountings if worn all day.

Local slang, uses of words that others find strange, is common here, after all it is TEXAS. We tell our patrons that opals have water inside them, and if not properly cared for will break due to the extremes of temperature. We tell them not to wear their opal ring to a football game and sit in the sun. Many a fine opal has been ruined on a hot day. Yet, what to do. Most people do not understand the subtle changes and gemological words used by others.

As for the Howard Rubin Gemdialogue charts one being a grey scale and a brown overly. Howard's work has been around for over 35 years. I have known Howard since I was one of the US delegates to the First International Colored Stones Congress held in Tel Aviv in 1983. That was also the year of the birth of the AGTA. I have some of Howard's work and

have followed his research for years. The smart chart grading system looks as if their charts use the same grey scale and brown

overlays as Rubins research. Only a guess, but if they used his system, it would be decent to give him credit.

I apologise for using words of an old teacher, Orlando Paddock. He was a mentor to many of us who were studied gemology in the 1970's here in Dallas. Some of his examples and terms were locally inspired.

It is difficult to separate local slang from Oxford dictionary terms. I used the term to see what your reactions would be? would you define the word as it is found gemology? dictionaries? science?

Yet, you guys did a expected and found different meanings for the word hydroscopic. I did this to illustrate a point from an earlier posting.

Legal meanings can make or break a case. The word meanings are not the same. This difference in usage is why on the Federal level we have tried to get all agencies on the same page with similar if not the same meanings. This is why few scam artists who enflate gems get caught. Truth in advertising becomes moot when a standard can be changed due to different meanings for the same set of words.

Winstone

GG, CIA, contributor 16 CFR 23, paralegal, CAD/CAM design, Christian symbols, BFA'65 art-jewelry BSA'67 UTexas gemological illustration

Matti

Location: Australia, Posted: Jun 09, 2007

The correct term technically for opal is "anhydrous" (silica).

While some here assert that opal is not hydroscopic (hygroscopic more commonly) it in fact is. Much opal which is "cracky" is so due to a very high water content - as the stone dries this causes stresses within the stone resulting in crazing and cracking. If it can dry, then it can absorb moisture also.

In regard to the "Smart Chart" - as the developer of the original software from which the "Smart Chart" was taken... (including byte for byte exact copies of the scales), I can assure you Winstone that I have never seen Howard Rubin's work. The scales were created by myself entirely.

If anybody here has a copy of the first release version of "Smart Chart", please contact me as a matter of urgency.

Respectfully,

Matti Ressler

Suomedia

About

me:

<http://www.oscommerce.com/community/interviews.johnson>

Mining: <http://suomedia.com/mining/>

From

<http://gemologyonline.com/Forum/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?t=1313&sid=a44d7a616f585622dfbee4e9a5ed76ed>

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World's Oldest Meteorite Found

The world's largest and oldest meteorite has been discovered in China near the northeastern city of Shenyang. The meteorite, locally called Haushita Hill, is estimated to be 4.5 to 4.6 billion years old and fell to earth 1.9 billion years ago.

The meteorite mound is 600 feet long, 250 feet wide, and about 300 feet deep. It weighs about 200 million tons and is covered with granite. The meteorite is older than any natural earth rock. The site is planned to be a state protected nature reserve.

From *Rock Chips*, 5/00; via *Breccia*, 7/07

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Top 10 Misconceptions about DINOSAURS

- 1) Dinosaurs represent failure and extinction. Rather, dinosaurs are the best examples of success and adaptation. They ruled the Earth longer than any other land animals (over 150 million years), and gave rise to BIRDS.

2) Dinosaurs and "humans" coexisted.

The death of the last dinosaur and the appearance of the first "human" (genus HOMO) was separated by about 62 million years.

3) Dinosaurs were either all hot-blooded or all cold-blooded.

Mesozoic dinosaurs were not "warm-blooded" like modern mammals, nor were they "cold-blooded" like modern lizards. Most specialists believe that dinosaurs were "dinosaur-blooded", a condition that combines certain aspects of "warm-bloodedness" with a changing metabolism over the animal's lifetime.

4) The word dinosaur means "terrible-lizard."

Actually it was originally defined to mean "fearfully-great lizard", by Richard Owen in 1842. The greek word "deinos", when used as a superlative, means "fearfully-great" (as used by Homer in THE ILLIAD). It became simplified over time, as a simple adjective, to mean "terrible". Dinosaurs are neither terrible nor are they lizards!

5) Whatever you read in the latest "dinosaur book" or see on T.V. or in the movies must be true.

Popular books, movies, and TV specials need not be 100% accurate. They often contain errors and outdated information, and may reflect the personal bias of the writer. (Most dinosaur books and TV scripts are not reviewed by professional dinosaur paleontologists).

6) Dinosaurs all lived and died at the same time.

The distance in time between Tyrannosaurus and Apatosaurus (formerly called "Brontosaurus") is more than the time between Tyrannosaurus and your parents, about 65 million years. Of the (approximately) 900 named species of [Mesozoic](#) dinosaurs, only two or three dozen species faced the final extinction in North America.

7) Mammals arose after the dinosaurs, and helped drive the dinosaurs into extinction by eating dinosaur eggs.

Mammals and dinosaurs both appeared in the [Late Triassic Period](#). There is no evidence that dinosaurs went extinct because of predation on their eggs.

8) An asteroid (or comet) killed the dinosaurs.

The controversy over the cause of the dinosaur extinction continues among paleontologists. However, [evidence](#) from a deep sea core drilled off the coast of Florida proves that an asteroid hit the Earth at the end of the Cretaceous which caused the dinosaur extinction. Most dinosaur specialists are willing to accept that an asteroid hit the Earth, but do not think that it was the sole cause of the Mesozoic extinctions. Instead, the fossil record reveals that dinosaurian diversity was already in decline by the end of the Cretaceous. The asteroid impact may have been "the straw that broke the camel's back."

9) All big reptiles from the prehistoric past ["Monsters"] are dinosaurs.

Dinosaurs represented less than 10% of the 40 groups of reptiles from the [Mesozoic Era](#) (Pterodactyls, sea-serpents, giant lizards, pelycosaur, and other BIG prehistoric beasts are NOT dinosaurs). "Monsters" and Dragons are the products of fiction and mythology. Dinosaurs are better because they are real!!

10) Archaeologists dig up dinosaurs.

Archaeology and paleoanthropology (subdivisions of Anthropology) only deals with man and covers the last 3-4 million years. Paleontology (a combination of Geology and Biology), deals with all fossils and covers the last 3.5 billion years!

compiled by M.K. Brett-Surman, Donald F. Glut, and Thomas R. Holtz

From <http://www.nmnh.si.edu/paleo/faq.html>

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Safety

*By Chuck McKie, CFMS Safety Chairman 2007
via the American Red Cross. August 2006*

Are you feeling lazy? Tired? Run-down? Maybe you are just old, like me. But perhaps you could do something about it. Restore yourself to that old time get-up-and-go feeling.

Eight Easy Ways to Boost Your Energy

Have you ever gotten a full 8 hours of sleep but still feel like you're dragging all day? Fatigue can be caused by more than just sleepless nights energy levels can depend on your health, diet, and daily habits. But there are some simple changes that you can make to your lifestyle to help make you feel well-rested and energized all day, every day.

1. **Get a checkup.** If you're really not feeling well, you may want to see a doctor to make sure your health is in check. How do you feel: As if you have the flu, as if your mind is in overdrive or as if you're depressed? Illness symptoms like loss of appetite, dizziness, muscle and joint aches, and cognition problems aren't normal, and are reason to see your doctor. Sometimes medications can affect your energy levels as well, and you may want to consult your doctor about any side effects you may notice.
2. **Honor your sleep.** Remove stimulants from the bedroom such as TV- so that the bedroom is associated with sleeping. Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and exercise within a few hours of bedtime, as they can make your ability to fall asleep more difficult. If you find yourself lying in bed unable to fall asleep, get up out of bed and do something boring - folding laundry, for example - to quiet your mind and relax. Also, try to stick to the same sleep schedule by going to bed and waking up at about the same time every day - including weekends!
3. **Adjust your diet.** If you're not eating a balanced diet, your body won't have the nutrients it needs to sustain a high energy level throughout the day. Be sure to eat a healthy combination of protein, carbohydrates, produce and fats. A lack of vitamins and minerals can also make you feel tired.
4. **Drink water.** Staying hydrated by drinking enough water and other liquids throughout the day can help keep your body functioning and energized. Most adults should drink at least 64 oz. of water a day.
5. **Eat smaller meals.** Eat smaller meals throughout the day to provide a continual but not overwhelming energy source. A big meal can make you feel sluggish, and eating less food more often may keep you running more efficiently. Smaller meals can also help you avoid the big drop in energy that often occurs after lunch. But by splitting up your meals, take care not to add calories to your total intake.
6. **Take breathing breaks.** When was the last time you stopped to take a long, full breath? The energizing effect of breathing breaks or other "moments of attention" can't be overemphasized, says Florence Meleo-Meyer, an instructor at the University of Massachusetts' Stress Reduction Program. Incorporate breathing breaks through the day to maintain a more constant energy state.
7. **Grab those sneakers.** Exercise increases feel-good chemicals in the brain, helps muscles use energy more effectively, and eases stiffness associated with fatigue, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. By staying fit and finding time for at least 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week, you'll feel more energized from the moment you wake up - plus you'll sleep more soundly.
8. **Stress Less.** If you feel yourself getting stressed, take a step back to prioritize, and pay attention to what needs to be done now. Stressing out can be exhausting, and taking a moment to relax and focus can give you the extra burst of energy you need to get through the day.

Learning how to manage your lifestyle to stay healthy and energized is important. American Red Cross health and safety training is a

great way to learn more about keeping yourself and others safe and healthy, through first aid and CPR courses or emergency preparedness. For more information, contact your local chapter, visit <http://www.redcross.org/> or call (800) 667-2968

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September 2007 Gem & Mineral Shows

7-9--ONTARIO, CA: Show, "Gem Faire"; Gem Faire Inc.; Ontario Convention Center/Exhibit Hall B, 2000 Convention Center Way; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-7, Sun. 10-5; admission \$5 (weekend pass); contact Gem Faire Inc., (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com.

15-16--JACKSON, CA: 7th annual Tailgate Gemboree; Fossils For Fun Society; Kennedy Gold Mine, 12594 Kennedy Mine Rd.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-5; free admission; rock and fossil auction Sat., dealers, mine museum and gift shop; contact Dan Brown, P.O. Box 664, Pioneer, CA 95666, (209) 296-6466; e-mail: fossilsforfun@hotmail.com.

15-16--PASO ROBLES, CA: 16th annual show, "Rockhound Roundup"; Santa Lucia Rockhounds; Pioneer Park and Museum, 2010 Riverside Dr., south of Mid-State Fairgrounds; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission; dealers, exhibits, raffle prizes, youth activities, silent auction, demonstrations; contact Mike Doherty, (805) 466-4061; e-mail: mhdoherty@tcsn.net.

15-16--REDWOOD CITY, CA: 41st annual show, "Harvest of Gems and Minerals"; Sequoia Gem & Mineral Society; Community Activities Bldg., 1400 Roosevelt Ave.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission; gem dealers, jewelry, minerals, fossils, rocks, games, displays, silent auction, raffle, door prizes, educational demonstrations, kids' activities; contact Carol Corden, (650) 248-7155; e-mail: ccorden@earthlink.net; Web site: <http://sgms.driftmine.com/home.htm>.

21-23--SAN BERNARDINO, CA: 6th annual tailgate; Orange Belt Mineralogical Society; Western Regional Little League Ball Park, 6707 Little League Dr.; Fri. 9-dusk, Sat. 9-dusk, Sun. 9-dusk; free admission; contact Al Carrell, (951) 961-5988, or Emma Rose, (951) 288-6182, or Lyle, (909) 887-3394.

21-23--SAN RAFAEL, CA: Show, "Gem Faire"; Gem Faire Inc.; Marin Center/Exhibit Hall, 10 Avenue of the Flags; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-7, Sun. 10-5;

admission \$5 (weekend pass); contact Gem Faire Inc., (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com.

22--LOS ALTOS, CA: Annual show, "Recreation With Rocks"; Peninsula Gem & Geology Society; Rancho Shopping Center, Foothill Expwy. at corner of Springer and Magdalena Rd.; Sat. 9:4:30; free admission; member rock collection exhibits, vendors, polished stones, geodes, mineral specimens, rocks, slabs, talk with enthusiastic rock lovers and real gold miners; contact David C. Muster, P.O. Box 4142, Mountain View, CA 94040-0142, (408) 245-2180; e-mail: colleen.mcggann@hds.com.

22-23--DOWNEY, CA: Annual show; Delvers Gem & Mineral Society; Woman's Club of Downey, 9813 Paramount Blvd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; free admission; dealers, demonstrations, exhibits, raffle, grab bags, boutique; contact Steve Miller, 7315 Cloverlawn Dr., South Gate, CA 90280, (562) 633-0614; e-mail: rockhound4279@sbcglobal.net.

22-23--SAN DIEGO, CA: Annual show; San Diego Lapidary Society; Bernardo Winery, 13330 Paseo Del Verano Norte; Sat. 10-4, Sun 10-4; free admission; gems, minerals, fossils, beads, jewelry; contact Bill Horning, (858) 748-0069; e-mail: info@sandiegolapidarysociety.org; Web site: www.sandiegolapidarysociety.org.

22-23--SAN FRANCISCO, CA: Show, "San Francisco Crystal Fair"; Jerry Tomlinson; Laguna Ave. and Marina Blvd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; contact Jerry Tomlinson, (415) 383-7837; e-mail: sfxtl@earthlink.net; Web site: www.crystalfair.com.

29-30--MONTEREY, CA: 48th annual show; Carmel Valley Gem & Mineral Society; Monterey Fairgrounds, 2004 Fairgrounds Rd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$3.50, children free with adult; exhibits, demonstrations, kids' activities; contact Janis Rovetti, 1047 Roosevelt St., Monterey, CA 93940, (831) 657-1933; e-mail: janis12@sbcglobal.net; Web site: www.cvgms.org.

29-30--STOCKTON, CA: Annual show, "Earth's Treasures"; Stockton Lapidary & Mineral Club; Scottish Rite Temple, 33 W. Alpine St.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; adults \$4, children 12 and under free with adult; jewelry making, stone carving, gemstone faceting, rock, mineral and jewelry displays, jewelry making supplies, beads, tools, books, \$1 off admission with this listing; contact Nettie Meissner, (209) 858-2263; Web site: www.stocktonlapidary.com.

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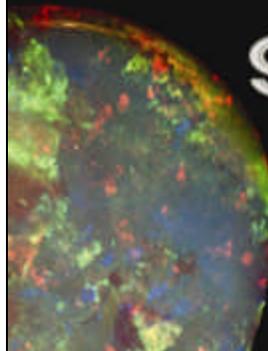
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Are Your Dues Due Now?
PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL. If your label shows the current month/year your dues are DUE NOW. If the date is older, your dues are overdue.
A Renewal Grace Period of two months will be provided. If your dues are due now you 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.
 Thank you,
The Editor

The Opal Express

American Opal Society
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**Volume #40 Issue #9
September 2007**

TO:

Some Topics In This Issue:

- Royal Rainbow Opal Mine Correction
- The Bowers Museum Field Trip – 9/ 23
- Simon King on the Himalaya Mine
- Question about Black Opal
- World's Oldest Meteorite Found
- Misconceptions about DINOSAURS
- Eight Easy Ways to Boost Your Energy

Important Info:

Board Meeting - September 11th

General Meeting - September 13th

**Opal Brightness Kit Workshop
Bring in your Brightest Opals!**

— GENERAL MEETINGS —

2nd Thursday of the Month
7:00 pm - 9:00 PM

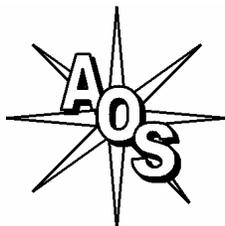
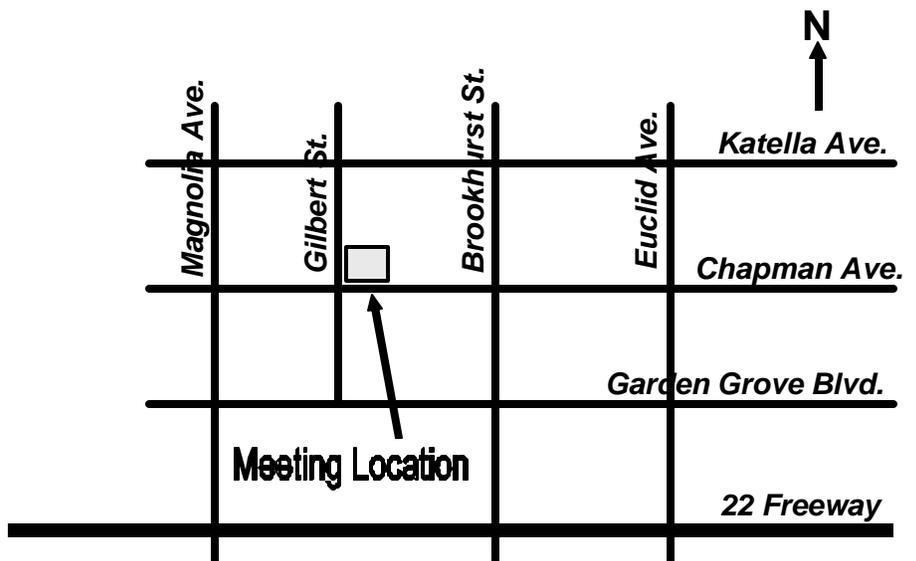
Garden Grove Civic Women's Club
9501 Chapman Ave.
Garden Grove, CA 92841

(NE corner of Gilbert & Chapman)

MEETING ACTIVITIES

Opal Cutting, Advice, Guest Speakers,
Slide Shows, Videos, Other Activities

September 13th: Build an Opal Brightness Kit Bring in your Brightest Opals and Chips



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