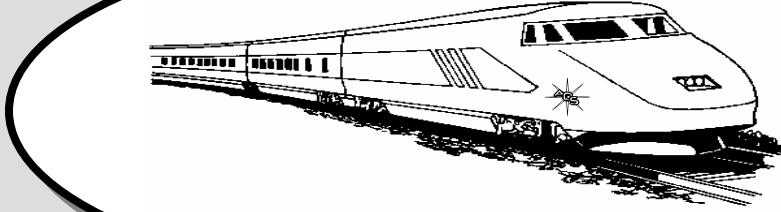


The Opal Express



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Presidents Message

By Jim Lambert

"The Show" is here! Don't miss it on **November 1st and 2nd, 2008**. Please be ready to volunteer your help. The Board gets very busy during the planning of this very complex event and, in our own humanity, may neglect to personally request individuals for help at the show. Please don't be shy or feel forgotten and walk up to any Board member to ask how you may help. Your help is needed very much and truly appreciated. Especially at the front table! Hope everybody had a great summer - Thank you!

Opal & Gem Show Seminar Schedule

Saturday, November 1st

11:00 am	Pete Goetz	Andamooka BBQ – How to Blacken Andamooka Matrix Opal
1:00 pm	Stan McCall	Advanced Inlay Techniques
3:00 pm	Dr. Walt Johnson	Gemstone Identification for the Swap Meet

Sunday, November 2nd

11:00 am	Tim Thomas	Opal Potpourri
12:00 pm	Larry Hoskinson & Leslie Neff	How to Find Opal in Yowah
1:00 pm	Dr. Walt Johnson	Casting Without Using a Centrifuge

**It's here!!!
Don't miss it!**

**The American Opal Society's 41st Annual
OPAL & GEM SHOW**
The Largest Opal Show in USA!
Sat. & Sun., November 1 & 2, 2008
Saturday 10AM - 6PM
Sunday 10 AM - 5PM

Opal and Gem Dealers from around the USA and Australia.
Rough and Cut Opals; other gemstones; jewelry & supplies.
Huge Raffle many prizes of gemstones, jewelry, tools, etc.
Free Opal Seminars on Saturday & Sunday with Paid Admission.

Free Demonstrations on gem cutting, jewelry making, etc.
Same Location Since 1991:

Clarion Hotel Anaheim Resort

616 Convention Way **ANAHEIM**, California
Close to **DISNEYLAND**
One block South of Katella on Harbor Blvd.
near the Anaheim Convention Center
For more information, contact:

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**Bring this Coupon for \$1.00
off Admission**

AOS Newsletter Coupon - 2008_010_05

2008 Opal & Gem Show Dealers

Company	Proprietor
Als Opals Imports	Yegoraw Zewdalem
Australian Opal	Larry Hoskinson & Leslie Neff
Australian Opal Imports	Eugene LeVan
Authenticone	Thomas Smith
Brian Petersen Opals and Fine Jewelry	Brain and Brandy Petersen
Burton's Gems & Opals	David Burton
Casa De Lumbre	Salvador Chavez
Cram Associates	Ron Martinez
Custom Creative Gem Cutting	Stan McCall
De Boer's Gemstone Treasures	Andrew De Boer
Earth Treasures	Rick Kennedy
House of Tibara	Tim and Barbara Thomas
It's a Blast	David Kramer
Johnson Brothers	Sonal Shah
Lasco Diamond Products	Donna Schultze
Lightning Ridge Opal Co.	John Ternus
Los Laureles Opals	Pedro Banuelos
Quality Jewelry	Dave Vanguan
Santiago Canyon College	Lothar Vallot
Savings Unlimited Gems & Minerals	Dale Atkins
Tikka Opals	Matti Tikka
Toledo Fine Art Jewelry	Daniel Toledo
True Blue Opals Pty. Ltd.	Sally Patel
Walter Johnson Jewelry	Dr. Walter Johnson
Wajia	Wajia

Raffle Donations Needed for Show

The Opal & Gem Show has a large raffle every year. This is a big fund raiser for the society. The AOS asks its members for **tax-deductible donations** for the raffle. Any extra gem, mineral; cut or rough, equipment, books, new or used, etc., would be appreciated. Please bring them to the Oct. meeting or to the Show. Thanks!

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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: "theshow".

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Opal Society Workshop

The American Opal Society's workshop is open at Ball Jr. High School every **Thursday** 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. 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.

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Featured Gemstone: Opal

Opal is the world's most popular phenomenal gem. Many

cultures have credited opal with supernatural origins and powers. Arabic legends say it falls from the heavens in flashes of lightning. The ancient Greeks believed opals gave their owners the gift of prophecy and guarded them from disease. Europeans have long considered the gem a symbol of hope, purity, and truth.

Opal is one of the US birthstones for October (along with tourmaline). Some people think it's unlucky for anyone born in another month to wear an opal, but that particular superstition comes from a novel written in the 1800s (Anne of Geierstein by Sir Walter Scott) and not from ancient belief or experience. In fact, throughout most of history, opal has been regarded as the luckiest and most magical of all gems because it can show all colors. Once, it was thought to have the power to preserve the life and color of blond hair.

Although experts divide gem opals into many different categories, the main types are:

- White opal - translucent to semi-translucent with play-of-color against a white or light gray body color.
- Black opal - translucent to opaque with play-of-color against a black or other dark body color.
- Fire Opal - transparent to translucent with brown, yellow, orange, or red body color. This

material, which often does not show play-of-color, is also known as "Mexican opal," "gold opal," or "sun opal."

The market supply of fine black opal is extremely limited, but white and fire opals are generally available in a wide range of sizes. You'll usually see black or white opals fashioned as cabochons and set in rings, pendants, pins, or earrings. Fire opals are used in the same kinds of jewelry, but they're often faceted. All three types occasionally appear as beads and carvings.

Pieces of white or black opal that are too thin to use alone often become part of opal doublets or triplets. In these assembled stones,

a sliver of opal is cemented, usually with black adhesive that dramatizes the play-of-color, to a backing such as chalcedony, glass, or plastic. A doublet consists of two pieces (the opal and the backing), while a triplet also has a protective top made of rock crystal quartz or colorless glass.

Explaining Play-of-Color

Play-of-color occurs because opal is made up of sub-microscopic spheres stacked in a grid-like pattern, like layers of



Opal on the cover of Gems & Gemology



Beautiful Black Opal from Lightning Ridge, NSW, Australia



Dragonfly Brooch with Opal

ping-pong balls in a box. This structure breaks up light into spectral colors. The colors you see depend on the sizes of the spheres. Those approximately 0.1 micron (one ten-millionth of a meter) in diameter produce violet. Spheres that are about 0.2 microns in size produce red. Those in between produce intermediate hues.

Common trade terms for play-of-color include:

- Pinfire or pinpoint - small, close-set patches of color
- Harlequin or mosaic - broad, angular, close-set patches of color
- Flame - sweeping reddish bands or streaks that shoot across the stone
- Peacock - mainly blue and green

Sources	
Australia	Black and white opal
Brazil	White opal
Mexico	Fire opal
Hardness & Toughness	
Hardness	5 to 6½ on Moh's scale
Toughness	Very poor to fair

Stability

High heat or sudden temperature change can cause fracturing. Opals are generally stable to light, but heat from intense light can cause fracturing (known as "crazing"). Opals are attacked by hydrofluoric acid and caustic alkalis. Loss of moisture, and crazing, can result from storage in airtight containers, such as safe deposit boxes.

Treatments (all treatments listed are common)			
Treatment	Purpose	Stability	Detection
Impregnation with oil, wax, or plastic.	Improves play-of-color and prevents or disguises fracturing. Black plastic also creates the appearance of black opal.	Fair to poor for oil or wax; excellent for plastic.	Oil and wax treatments are detectable by a trained gemologist or gemological laboratory. Advanced laboratory testing is almost always required for plastic. *
Soaking in dye, silver nitrate, or sugar and acid (known as "sugar treatment").	Creates or improves play-of-color and simulates the appearance of black opal.	Poor to good	Detectable by a trained gemologist or gemological laboratory. *
Smoke impregnation.	Creates or improves play-of-color and simulates the appearance of black opal.	Fair to poor. Treatment is shallow, and abrades or chips away easily.	Detectable by a trained gemologist or gemological laboratory. *

*If there is any doubt, send the gem to a gemological laboratory for verification

Care and Cleaning

Opals can be cleaned with warm, soapy water. Avoid ultrasonic and steam cleaning.

Imitations and Synthetics

Glass and plastic have been used to imitate opal, and synthetic opals are available in a variety of colors

Alternatives

No gem duplicates opal's unique combination of color and phenomenon. As alternatives, you might suggest stones with similar body colors, or those that show other special optical effects, such as fire agate, and iris agate.

Text from GIA's *Essential Colored Stone Reference Guide* ©1999

From <http://www.gia.edu>

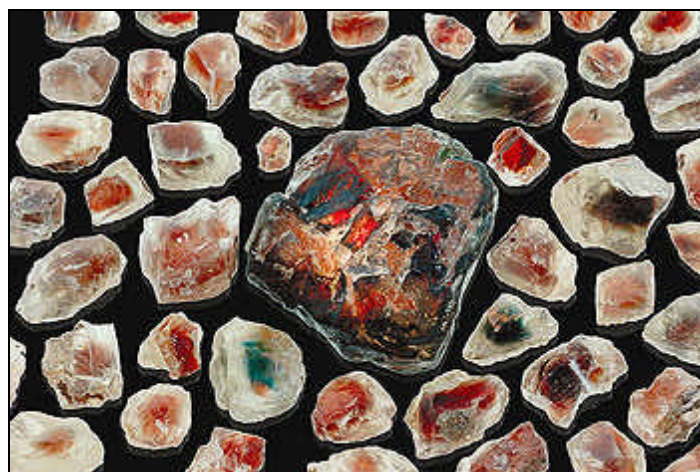
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The Furor over Feldspar

All-natural Oregon sunstone and similar-looking treated andesine once sold as natural are locked in apples-and-oranges competition that is both unfair and unnecessary.

By David Federman

Until recently, brick- and salmon-red sunstone -- both clear and with schiller --were rarities. True, renewed mining of this feldspar in Oregon -- generally conceded to be the source of the world's best sunstone -- brought more fine colors on the market than had been seen in years. But fine stones cost at least \$100 per carat, usually far more.



Sunstone rough; photo courtesy of Desert Sun Mining and Gems

Then, in early 2007, look-alikes costing \$40 per carat suddenly hit the market in impressive numbers. None of its sellers called it sunstone. Instead, most called it andesine, which is a first cousin of labradorite (the scientific name for sunstone) in the plagioclase series of feldspars. [Plagioclase consists of six species, identified according to the ratio of calcium to sodium -- their two predominant chemical components.] This next-of-kin gemological status invited many consumers to think of andesine as an affordable alternative to pricier Oregon sunstone, especially because sellers swore it was all-natural.

Then one of the leading on-air and on-line marketers of andesine -- Knoxville-based Jewelry Television -- did an about-face and admitted stones were treated to attain their beautiful colors. Buyers were offered full refunds for their andesine purchases.

The question remained: How were the stones improved? A buyer at JTV told Colored Stone that the network believes stones were treated using a repeat process involving two exposures of stones to 30 days of heating followed each time by tumbling. That would seem to indicate diffusion of copper -- sunstone's chief coloring agent -- was involved. It would also seem to indicate that Mexico, which produces tons of straw-yellow low- or no-copper labradorite, may be the source of the so-called andesine.

But no matter where the treated andesine is produced, why perform the process twice? One American treater theorizes that the interaction of feldspar with copper may create a diffusion-resistant color coating, similar to the cobalt coating created when using

diffusion to color topaz. This diffusion shield may require tumbling to remove it, followed by further heating for deeper color penetration.

At this point, all is conjecture. Presently, GIA and Cal Tech are conducting research on these suspect feldspars to determine the exact cause of their color. But an answer isn't expected for months. What does one do in the mean time? We recommend sticking with Oregon sunstone -- that is, if you want all-natural, all-American feldspar.

A Sunstone Mining Renaissance

This isn't the first time that Oregon sunstone has caused feldspar fever. Discovered in 1980 in eastern Oregon, the gem gained instant acclaim for its never-before-seen brick reds and spruce greens. Another plus in its overnight popularity: transparency. Until then, most sunstone that jewelers saw was translucent material from India, suited for bead and cabochon cutting. Oregon quickly overtook India in all existing quality categories and topped it with unprecedented amounts of facetable material.

By 1991, sunstone was the fourth most important U.S. gem in terms of dollar value -- leaping ahead of tourmaline. That year, the Bureau of Mines reported Oregon's feldspar output was worth \$1.5 million -- three times the preceding year's total. Of this amount, at least four-fifths came from the Ponderosa Mine -- then and now the state's biggest sunstone mining operation.

In 2003, financiers John and Talley Woodmark, as well as Bruce Moore took over operation of the mine, renamed it Desert Sun Mining and Gems, and gradually pushed annual production from its previous mid-1990s peak of 400 kilos to 860 kilos last year. "The secret," says John Woodmark, "is mechanization. We knew that if ever we were to make a fully functioning market in Oregon sunstone we had to have large, easily replenished stockpiles of every size and shape we offer."

With 500,000 carats of Ponderosa's desirable orange, red, pink and green stones on hand (plus another 250,000 carats of pleasingly mild yellow material), Woodmark believes he can inspire confidence in sunstone among major chains. And don't forget the Dust Devil, Spectrum and Outback sunstone mines over in Plush, which are estimated to account for another 250,000 carats of colored sunstone.

Oregon sunstone mines have wisely pursued a two-pronged approach to popularization. First, they recruited leading lapidaries like Dalan Hargrave, Glenn Lehrer, John Dyer and Larry Woods to craft their top-grade roughs into prize-winning, publicity-grabbing gems and carvings. Second, they've been mindful of the need to keep their sunstone prices low. So they have farm out the lion's share of calibrated and free-size cutting to Chinese and Indian factories. Desert Sun prides itself on always having 400 of every calibrated size and shape they offer in stock. "Commitment to customer needs is essential for success," Woodmark says.

That's one way to keep sunstone affordable. Face it, price is a compelling factor in sunstone's new appeal. With the cost of popular pinkish red spinels and orangey garnets on a steep, steady ascent, similar-color sunstone offers substantial price relief -- without any sacrifice of beauty and only slightly less hardness (sunstone is 6.5 to 7.2 on the Mohs scale compared to 8 for spinel and 7 to 7.5 for tourmaline).

What's more, Oregon, which is blessed with more transparent stones than any other sunstone locality, is a looks leader -- boasting deep mandarin orange and imperial topaz reds; salmon and October-leaf pink; purplish reds; and spruce greens. No other sunstone locality has been known to produce as many colors. In



Sunstone briolettes; photo courtesy of Rogue Gems.

fact, the Western Hemisphere's largest rival region for sunstone in northern Mexico is known principally for straw-yellow stones.

Oregon sunstones are commonly bi-colored and frequently feature stunning greens framed in, or intersected by, red. The unexpectedly prolific sight of these two-toned stones at this year's Tucson Gem Show, says Helen Driggs, managing editor of Jewelry Artist, "detoured me from my search for watermelon tourmaline to sunstone."

Multi-hues weren't the gem's only virtue that made her eye it and buy it. Oregon sunstones are famous for copper platelet inclusions which, when densely populated, reflect light in shimmering sheets that impart a phenomenon called "schiller" to stones. Driggs calls this "sunstone's unique rosy glow" and likens it to "the gemological equivalent of orangey northern lights." No wonder schiller-rich salmon-red Oregon sunstone briolettes are the biggest seller at Portland-based Rogue Gems which specializes in Oregon sunstone.

Disorder Below the Border

It would be nice to report that most Oregon sunstone is red, orange or green. But such colors account for 15 percent of mine output. Another ten percent has attractive schiller and the remainder is what miners call "clear," a word that refers to mostly soft-yellow and off-white hues. And we haven't even touched on the enormous amount of material suitable for bead and cabochon cutting.

No matter what the color, Oregon sunstones are all-natural and untreated. This isn't to say that treaters might not be experimenting with ways to produce more desirable colors. But no one we talked to versed in



Faceted green sunstone, cut by John Dyer; photo courtesy of John Dyer.

heat treatment and chemical color diffusion -- the methods most likely to be used to turn yellow feldspar red and orange -- was aware of the successful application of these technologies to Oregon sunstone. We raised the issue with treaters because, as said before, Jewelry Television, perhaps the world's largest home-shopping gemstone seller, recently did on-air and on-line mea culpas, complete with refund offers, for selling treated Asian andesine as all-natural. Why the turn-about?

No one really knows where any of the suspect andesine is coming from. Sellers say it's from Tibet, the Congo, Tanzania -- all of the sources mentioned in most standard gemology textbooks. But if you read the descriptions given for this andesine and labradorite in the reference works, they all describe them as possessing colors similar to Oregon's.

Only one cutter that we know of, John Dyer, based in Edina, Minnesota, has actually worked with Tibetan rough, provided by a Chinese supplier he met at the Tucson Gem Show. Dyer says the material does not have the richness of color and appearance he associates with Oregon sunstone and he will not use it again -- despite its lower price.

"Do you think it was treated?" I ask him. Dyer says he has no reason to suspect that it is since the supplier assured him it came direct from the mine.

No one else whom we talked to that regularly cuts or sells sunstone has been able to secure or examine any andesine rough. But given recent scandals involving treated ruby and emerald rough, the scarcity of andesine rough only fuels fears of gemological hanky panky. Here's the worst of our fears:

Sunstone owes both its reds and greens to copper, depending on this trace element's valence. If a plagioclase is deficient in this element, then it must be added using, most likely, diffusion. Since Oregon sunstone is strongly endowed with copper, it would seem foolish to risk its sterling reputation adding artificial color by means of copper



"Killer schiller" red sunstone, cut by John Dyer; photo courtesy of John Dyer.

This would only make sense on copper-free material such as that from Mexico, which is producing tons of straw-yellow, low- or no-copper labradorite and selling it to Asian dealers. If Mexican feldspar is the culprit, then you can bet the ranch that this south-of-the-border labradorite owes its color to oven alchemy.

So if you want full-integrity feldspar, stick with Oregon sunstone. Although we have seen top-grade large red pieces selling for over \$500, even \$1,000, per carat, there is ample fine material available for between \$100 and \$200 per carat. And there is much medium to better grade goods available for considerably less than \$100 per carat. While that's higher than misrepresented felon feldspars from Mexico, we think that's a fair price to pay for tamper-free labradorite.

From <http://www.colored-stone.com/stories/mar08/sunstone.cfm>
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Factoids: Diamonds

Every year, one of the most popular gifts given during the holiday season are diamonds. Here are some interesting facts about diamonds, provided by the Gemological Institute of America in Carlsbad, Calif.

Did you know...?

- Diamonds are the hardest natural substance on Earth.
- Diamonds were formed approximately 100 miles beneath the earth's surface.
- Diamond crystals are brought closer to the earth's surface through volcanic activity.
- 250 tons of earth must be mined to produce a single one-carat diamond.
- Less than 20 percent of the diamonds mined worldwide are gem-quality.
- The earliest written account of diamonds dates back to around 500 B.C.

Did you know...?

- In their pure state, diamonds are colorless.
- Blue and pink are the rarest colored diamonds.
- Yellow and brown are the most common colored diamonds.

Did you know...?

- Diamond is the hardest natural substance on earth.
- Diamonds are virtually fireproof. To burn a diamond, it must be heated to 1292 degrees Fahrenheit. (The typical house fire reaches a temperature of approximately 1100 degrees.)
- Only one polished diamond out of a thousand weighs more than one carat.
- The word carat comes from the Carob Mediterranean tree whose seed was used for centuries as the standard of weighing precious stones.
- 1 carat = .2 grams or .007 ounces.

- The largest rough diamond, discovered in 1905, is the Cullinan diamond, weighing in at 3,106 carats (2.8 pounds)!

Did you know...?

- Even though the U.S. only accounts for less than one percent of total global gemstone production, America buys more than half of the world's gem quality diamonds – making it the world's largest diamond market. (Consumers in the united states alone purchased \$9 billion worth of loose gem-quality diamonds in 2001.)
- Australia produces the most diamonds by volume.
- Until the 18th century, the only diamond mines were in India.

Courtesy the Gemological Institute of America.

http://www.gia.edu/newsroom/3720/6424/public_interest_articles_de tails.cfm

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Hallmarking: What Are Those Stamped Marks on My Ring?

By [Gary Hocking](#)

Hallmarking began somewhere back in the thirteenth century most likely in France. Its purpose was to test coins made of silver and gold so that the correct amount of precious metal was actually in the item. It was the original consumer protection law.

In England in 1327 it became law that if you were selling an item made of precious metal it had to be tested. Manufacturers were compelled to take their articles to the hall where the Assay Master would test the precious metal content. Once it passed the test then he stamped the item with marks indicating the fineness or content of the precious metal and eventually other stamps were added such as a date, maker and the assay office mark. So the term hallmarking came into existence.

Right up until 1773 if you tried to dupe your customers by counterfeiting the hallmark stamps the offence was punishable by death. Thank God it was then changed to just the offender being sent off to one of the penal colonies for a mere 14 years! Today in the UK it is just 10 years in the clink.

So what do these marks look like?

The marks tell three basic things: the maker (or his sponsor if he is not available), the fineness or amount or percentage of precious metal in the item and the assay office where it was tested. The maker will have his own particular stamp in letters, the fineness will be a number such as 925, and the assay office's mark will be a symbol such as the current Birmingham office's mark which is an anchor. There are other non compulsory marks as well.

Over the centuries these marks have changed significantly and that's a great thing for dating antique jewellery and watches. For instance, when a certain mark was used for the year then we can accurately date the time an item may have been made. When marks changed along the way that helps us quickly identify the general period of manufacture.

Does Jewellery need to be assayed today?

Legally in the UK and some European countries it certainly does. Some other countries allow a self regulation to take place. Other countries which do not consider themselves as major producers have no requirement. The stamp such as 925 on silver jewellery is not hallmarking. So in Australia you will see 9 carat or 925 stamped on a silver ring but this is an indication that the manufacturer claims the correct content of precious metal has been included but this is not hallmarking which takes place in the UK.

What does it mean to you the purchaser of an 18 carat engagement ring?

Well, if the manufacturer has cheated you and your ring is only 95% precious metal then you would never know. It is so minute an amount that you would not perceive it. The only way you, as a layman, will ever be able to tell is by comparing the ring to another piece of 18 carat gold jewellery. However, if a large manufacturer on the world stage saves a fraction of gold on every item then that would be an enormous profit saving at the end of the year. So while this law is there to protect you do you really care? The manufacturer

has to get the item to an assay office, insure its delivery, wait a few days to get it back and then pay for the service. So who is really going to pay for all this? You of course!

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Author: Gary Hocking who makes jewellery for people all over the world. He has his own website

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Precious Opal in the Northwest

I found this reference to an unknown opal deposit in Washington State. Sounds very interesting. The Editor

March 28, 2008

I have an opal dealer that showed me a huge chunk - 22 pounds of opal in matrix. The opal layers are thick and dark blue based with multi-color flash. The host rock is Rhyolite. This opal was found in



Photo 1 - Washington state opal in matrix! New find.

the north Puget Sound Cascades off of I90, and there is much more.

I do not know where it was found exactly since it was picked up as a boulder that was thought to be agatized. I will photograph it when I purchase it this weekend. The person who found the opal can not find the location again, so it is still out there!

It is at the base of a rock fall that is made up of decayed rhyolite, and is on the South side of the freeway near the pass. The other boulders showed what he thought was a blue agate. The opal is crystal and without cracks and is very bright.

[Sporeboy](#), Seattle

I could be wrong here. But... my guess is, of course they know exactly where it is and aren't telling, which by the sounds of it, would make financial sense.

Still... Damn, that would be cool to know the exact spot and the extent of what's there.

That's weird... Geologically speaking, that just doesn't sound like the type of region one would find opal in. Wow!

:-)

-Curt

I just got back from buying the local NW opal piece, and have posted a couple of photos.

It is a dark blue base that is seamed between layers of agate and white common opal. I cut a small corner off and faced it. Very bright broad-flash, and very stable. The opal has been tested and has a water content of %0.6. Very low, and a Mohs of 7 with no cracks.



Photo 2 - Washington state opal in matrix! New find.

It could well be that this is the American stable opal that would put us on the map.

It is in a matrix of decayed Rhyolite and quartz, and came from the talus apron of the Snoqualmie pluton where the host rock has been metamorphasized, so it is a large area to search.

The location is not a secret because I bought it from an individual who thought it was agate initially, and did not note where it was found. He told me that if I could find it to let him know so it can be assessed and claimed. But, like I said, it is a big area to search. The good news is that he said that all of the boulders had seams of blue running g through them among a huge rock slide....

[Sporeboy](#), Seattle

Was it on the West side of the pass?

[Zachary](#)

Yes, the west side of the Cascades.

It is somewhere between the Northern California Cascades and the B.C Cascades.

In Washington...

[Sporeboy](#), Seattle

O.K. that was not fair.

It is towards the Snoqualmie Pass. I have to be a bit careful about the whereabouts until it is claimed.

[Sporeboy](#), Seattle

From <http://rockhoundsoforegon.tribe.net>

Turquoise - An Ancient Gem with Modern Panache

Turquoise is one of the world's most ancient gemstones. Archaeological excavations have revealed that Egyptian royalty wore turquoise jewelry as early as 5500 B.C. Chinese artisans were

carving it more than 3,000 years ago. Native American tribes have worn turquoise as a ceremonial gem and adorned their jewelry and amulets with it for thousands of years. Yet this appealing bluish gem maintains its charm, even today, as a favored accessory worldwide. Celebrities including Cher, Jennifer Lopez, Macy Gray, Jennifer Love Hewitt, and Lenny Kravitz have all been spotted wearing this timeless jewel.



Turquoise makes a big hit in new fashions. Photo by Robert Weldon

GIA's world-renowned education teaches that turquoise most likely first arrived in Europe around the thirteenth century from Turkish sources. Deriving its name from the French expression Pierre tourques, or "Turkish stone," turquoise is mined worldwide, including Egypt, China, and the U.S. Turquoise is the present-day December birthstone, and is designated as the 11th wedding anniversary gift.

The Egyptians believed that turquoise possessed magical properties in that it could thwart misfortune and heal a variety of ailments. The national gem of Tibet, turquoise has long been

considered to bestow health and good luck. The Apaches thought that turquoise attached to a bow or firearm increased the accuracy of a hunter or warrior.

The gem's color ranges from light to medium blue or greenish-blue, and is usually opaque. Spiderweb turquoise – a popular variation – displays veins of matrix (its host rock) in web-like patterns. Persian (Iranian) turquoise is considered the finest quality and also the most expensive, and it exhibits an intense light to medium blue, typically with no matrix. It has the ability to take on a glossy polish. Other turquoise varieties include American, Mexican, Egyptian, and Chinese are a significant source today.

Large turquoise stones are common; however the gem is also plentiful in a wide range of sizes, and is often used for beads, cabochons, carvings, and inlays. Trendy fashion designers have more recently sewn it into clothing and bejeweled purses with it. Turquoise's popularity has varied throughout time. Currently it is a hot item not only for Hollywood divas, but is also universally liked because of its commercial abundance. Its most enduring appeal remains in the American Southwest and among those who are captivated by that region's mystery and romance, as well as by its blue skies, reminiscent of turquoise's color.

GIA's gem experts say turquoise is typically enhanced before it reaches the market, and special care should be taken to maintain its vitality. For example, gem traders commonly impregnate the gem with plastic or wax to improve the color and durability, or dye it with liquid black shoe polish in a pattern imitating the matrix web. GIA recommends avoiding heat and acetone-like solvents. Perspiration, skin oils, cosmetics, and other chemicals may turn a blue turquoise to green. GIA also cautions that when purchasing the gem, one should have a qualified, GIA-trained jeweler verify that the stone is a natural, synthetic or a simulant.

GIA is internationally known as the world's foremost authority in the identification and grading of diamonds and colored gemstones. Since 1931, the Institute has worked to ensure the public's trust through its nonprofit education, research and laboratory services. For more information, visit [GIA's Web site](http://www.gia.edu), or call 800-421-7250.

From <http://www.gia.edu/newsroom>

Lost Opal Mine

In 1877, a party of prospectors seeking gold in the Horse Shoe Mountains found a rich opal deposit somewhere south of the Duncan-Lordsburg Road. They staked a claim and took some samples but later sold their rights rather than work the mine themselves. Later they heard that the pair to whom they had sold the claim had worked it pretty regularly for two years before the Apaches got to them. As usual, the Indians hid the mine -probably by causing a landslide. Between the landslide and the Indians, no one figured it would be worth their while to try to relocate a claim that had already been worked pretty hard for two years.

In addition to the fact that opals today would be worth a good sight more than in 1877, an additional incentive to search for this one might be the claim that the two gem miners only sold a few of their stones in Lordsburg during the entire two years they were working the mine. The rest were obviously cached for retirement day. The Indians sent them to early retirement, and the cache is probably still hidden somewhere in the vicinity of the mine.

Sources:

Cushman, Dan, *The Great North Trail*, McGraw Hill, 1966.

Horgan, Paul, *The Conquistadore in North America*, Fawcett Publications, 1963.

Terry, Thomas P, *U.S. Treasure Atlas*, Specialty Pub., 1985.

From http://www.lostgold.us/html/new_mexico1.htm

I believe this mine in the same one mentioned in the March 2006 Opal Express article "Lost Opal Mine Information Request"

(http://opalsociety.org/members_only_1/opal_express/AOSNewsletter2006_03.pdf). The Editor

November 2008 Gem & Mineral Shows

31-2--BLACK CANYON CITY, AZ: Show, "Rock-A-Rama"; Braggin' Rock Club; Albins Civic Center, 19055 E. K Mine Rd.; Fri. 9-4, Sat. 9-4, Sun. 9-4; free admission; mineral displays, dealers, raffles; contact Don Ingalls, P.O. Box 308, Black Canyon City, AZ 85324, (623) 374-0202

31-2--EUGENE, OR: 51st annual show; Springfield Thunderegg Rock Club; Oakway Center, 112 Coburg Rd., off Hwy. 126; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-7, Sun. 11-4; free admission; dealers, demonstrators, door prizes, raffle; contact Jim Nelson, (541) 687-8100

1--TUCSON, AZ: 7th annual silent auction; Old Pueblo Lapidary Club; 3118 N. Dale; Sat. 9-2; free admission; contact Danny Harmsen, (520) 323-9154

1-2--ANAHEIM, CA: 41st annual show, "Opal and Gem Show"; The American Opal Society; Clarion Hotel Anaheim Resort, 616 Convention Way; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$4, seniors and students \$3; opal and gem dealers from around the USA and Australia, rough and cut opals, opal jewelry, books, tools, raffle, free seminars (opals, gemstones, mining, etc.), free demonstrations (gemstone cutting, jewelry making, etc.); contact Gene LeVan, P.O. Box 4875, Garden Grove, CA 92842, (562) 621-1805; e-mail: fineblackopal@sprynet.com; Web site: <http://opalsociety.org>

1-2--CONCORD, CA: Show, "Earth's Treasures--Large & Small"; Contra Costa Mineral & Gem Society; Clayton Fair Shopping Center, 5298 Clayton Rd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$5; door prizes, silent auction, youth activities, 18 vendors, 12 demonstrators, 60 exhibits, 65 million-year-old Ice Age fossils, fluorescent display, Scout program, Diablo Dan Cafe, \$1-off coupons on Web site; contact Sam Woolsey, (925) 837-3287; email: sdwools@earthlink.net; Web site: www.ccmgs.org

1-2--RIDGECREST, CA: 53rd annual show; Indian Wells Gem & Mineral Society; Desert Empire Fairgrounds, 520 S. Richmond Rd.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-5; free admission; contact John DeRosa, (760) 375-7905

6-9--SAN JOSE, CA: Show, "The New Jewelry, Gem, Bead, Mineral & Coin Show"; High Sierra Investment Group Inc.; Santa Clara Fairgrounds, 344 Tully Rd.; Thu. 2-6, Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-7, Sun. 10-5; adults \$6, seniors and students \$3, children free; seminar on finding and panning for gold, certified gemologist and appraiser on hand; contact High Sierra Investment Group Inc., 20385 Pahute Rd., Apple Valley, CA 92308, (760) 961-2728; e-mail: Gefisher39@aol.com; Web site: www.highsierrainvestments.net

8-9--EDMONDS, WA: Annual fall show; Maplewood Rock & Gem Club; Maplewood Clubhouse, 8802 196th St. SW; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; free admission; displays, kids' activities, rock sales, demonstrations; contact Beverly Ryder, 4625 Strumme Rd., Bothell, WA 98012, (425) 338-4184; e-mail: famryd@aol.com; Web site: www.maplewoodrockclub.com

8-9-LANCASTER, CA: Show, "Rock'N'Gem Roundup"; Palmdale Gem & Mineral Club; Antelope Valley Fair Grounds, 2551 W. Ave. H, Hwy. 14 and Ave. H; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-5; free admission; lapidary displays, kids' activities, lapidary demonstrations, more than 25 vendors; contact Susan Chaisson-Walblom, 42122 52nd St. W, Quartz Hill, CA 93536, (661) 943-1861; e-mail: slchaisson@yahoo.com

13-16-RENO, NV: Show, "The New Jewelry, Gem, Bead, Mineral & Coin Show"; High Sierra Investment Groups Inc.; Reno-Sparks Convention Center, 4950 S. VASt.; Thu. 2-6, Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-7, Sun. 10-5; adults \$6, seniors and students \$3, children free; Special Seminar on finding and panning for gold, certified gemologist and appraiser on hand; contact High Sierra Investment Group Inc., 20385 Pahute Rd., Apple Valley, CA 92308, (760) 961-2728; e-mail: Gefisher39@aol.com; Web site: www.HighSierraInvestments.net

20-23-POMONA, CA: Show, "The New Jewelry, Gem, Bead, Mineral & Coin Show"; High Sierra Investment Group Inc.; LA Fairgrounds Fairplex - Bldg. 8, 1101 W. McKinley Ave.; Thu. 2-6, Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-7, Sun. 10-5; adults \$6, seniors and students \$3, children free; seminar on finding and panning for gold; certified gemologist and appraiser on hand; contact High Sierra Investment Group Inc., 20385 Pahute Rd., Apple Valley, CA 92308, (760) 961-2728; e-mail: Gefisher39@aol.com; Web site: www.HighSierraInvestments.net

21-23-SANTA MONICA, CA: Show, "Bead Faire"; Gem Faire Inc.; Santa Monica Civic Auditorium, 1855 Main St.; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$5 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

22-23-BREMERTON, WA: Show, "Fall Festival of Gems"; Kitsap Gem & Mineral Society; The President's Hall, Kitsap County Fairgrounds, 1200 Fairgrounds Rd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; contact Gerry Alexander, (360) 876-4543

22-23-OXNARD, CA: Show, "Garnets: A Gem For Everyone"; Oxnard Gem & Mineral Society; Oxnard Performing Arts Center, 800 Hobson Way; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-4; free admission; displays, demonstrations, kids' activities, door prizes, raffle, silent auction, vendors, gems, minerals, beads, fossils, opals, petrified wood, precious stones; contact Miriam Tetreault, 1134 Sunnycrest Ave., Ventura, CA 93003, (805) 642-5779; e-mail: show@oxnardgem.com; Web site: www.oxnardgem.com

27-30-LONG BEACH, CA: Show, "The New Jewelry, Gem, Bead, Mineral & Coin Show"; High Sierra Investment Group Inc.; Long Beach Convention Center, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.; Thu. 2-6, Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-7, Sun. 10-5; adults \$6, seniors and students \$3, children free; special seminar on finding and panning for gold, certified gemologist and appraiser on hand; contact High Sierra Investment Group Inc., 20385 Pahute Rd., Apple Valley, CA 92308, (760) 961-2728; e-mail: Gefisher39@aol.com; Web site: www.HighSierraInvestments.net

29-30-MONTEREY, CA: Show, "Gem Faire"; Gem Faire Inc.; Monterey County Fairgrounds, 2004 Fairground Rd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$5 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

29-30-SAN FRANCISCO, CA: Show, "The Great San Francisco Crystal Fair"; Pacific Crystal Guild; Fort Mason Center, Bldg. A, Laguna and Marina Ave.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; adults \$6, children under 12 free; gems, jewelry, crystals, beads, psychics; contact Jerry Tomlinson, (415) 383-7837; e-mail: sfxltl@earthlink.net; Web site: www.crystalfair.com

29-30-WICKENBURG, AZ: 8th annual Wickenburg Gem & Art Fair; Wickenburg Gem & Mineral Society; Wickenburg Community Center, 160 N. Valentine St.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; free admission; more than 30 vendors, gems, minerals, jewelry, local artists, photo exhibit, door prizes, grab bags, Spinning Wheel; contact Lucille Burroughs, P.O. Box 20375, Wickenburg, AZ 85358, (928) 684-0099; e-mail: gnl@q.com

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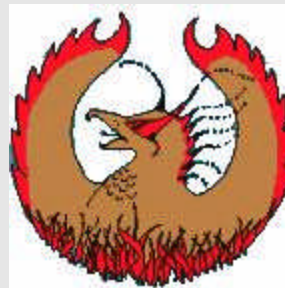
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Are Your Dues Due Now?
PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL. If your label shows the current month/year your dues are DUE NOW. If the date is older, your dues are overdue.
A Renewal Grace Period of two months will be provided. If your dues are due now you 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
 P.O. Box 4875
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**Volume #41 Issue #11
 November 2008**

TO:

Some Topics In This Issue:

- Opal Show Seminars Announced
- Opal Show Dealers Listed
- Raffle Donations Needed
- Featured Gemstone: Opal
- The Furor over Feldspar
- Factoids: Diamonds
- Hallmarking
- New Opal Find in the Northwest
- Turquoise - An Ancient Gem
- Lost Opal Mine

Important Info:

Board Meeting - November 3rd

Opal & Gem Show – November 1st

General Meeting - November 13th

November 1 & 2 Opal & Gem Show

November 13 General Meeting

— **GENERAL MEETINGS** —

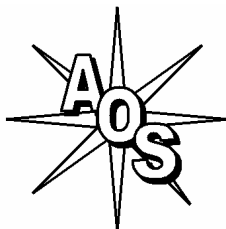
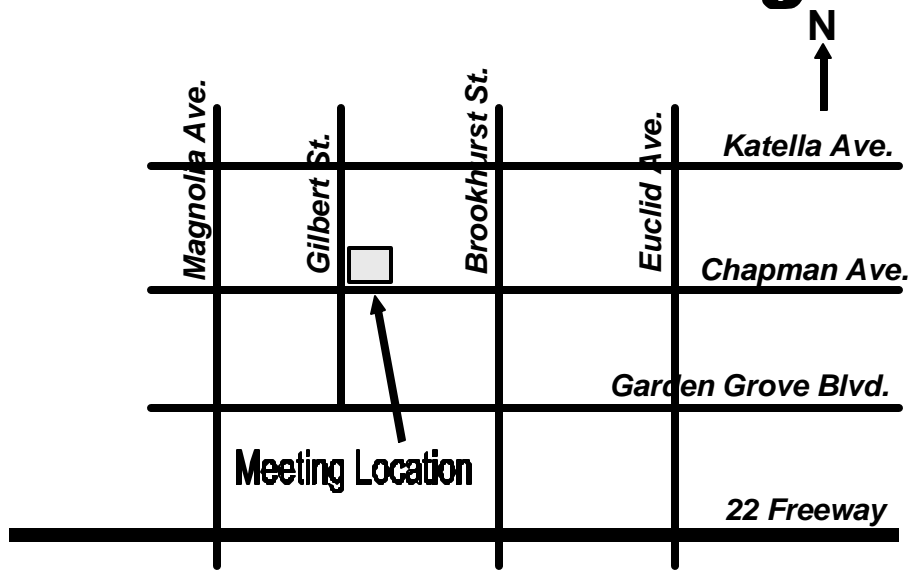
2nd Thursday of the Month
 7:00 pm - 9:00 PM

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



The American Opal Society
<http://OpalSociety.org>

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