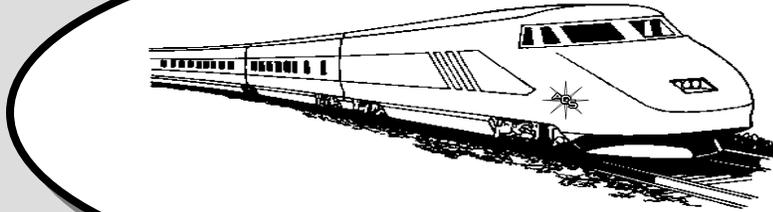


# The Opal Express

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## President's Message

By Pete Goetz

Hey fellow OPALHOLICS, hope 2011 started well for you and yours. Things here are off to an OK start. We were able to pay all our operating and show costs and have a few bucks left in the bank. Not bad, but should be better.

A priority of the Board of Directors this year is to strengthen our fiscal health. The first thing we have done was to negotiate a venue for the next two years. One of the largest costs we face every year is the cost of renting a hall big enough to house our show. This has usually been an unknown. The obvious benefit here is that knowing this cost early in the year, we can allocated what little funds we have to improving the amount and quality of advertising the show and improving it's presentation.

The second thing we have considered is changing the date when annual dues are due (no pun intended). Instead of have them due on your anniversary date, they would be due in the month of February. This change, again, is a budgeting issue and will also simplify record keeping issues. A future notification will be made concerning this. Take no action yet.

Other changes will be made in the way the Board of Directors delegates and administers Society business, Show administration and advertising, and the Societies public image.

The last thing I would like to mention this month is the Societies need for your help. All of us have our reasons for being a member of the American Opal Society, There are those of us that have a true OPALHOLIC approach to OPAL,

there those of us that find membership beneficially to there own commerce, there are those of us that may just have general interest in 'things'; all these reason are fair and good reasons. However, it takes talent and resources to maintain our Society and to present an annual event in an atmosphere that attracts domestic as well as vendors from other countries. At the same time we want to create an event that both visitors and buyers are willing to attend.

So, how can I help you say, well, by volunteering to set-up, administer and maintain the daily activities of the show, and tear-down the show at the end. If any of our members has knowledge of 'good' speakers or can speak on a subject of interest the society, provide us with contact information. Another way you can help, if you can not be here physically, is financially. The Society gladly accepts all types of donations that have or can be converted into monetary value. All are tax deductible, since we are a non-profit organization.

## Members Only Website Password

To log onto the website's members only area at: [http://opalsociety.org/aos\\_members\\_only\\_area.htm](http://opalsociety.org/aos_members_only_area.htm) type: Name: "member" and Password: "opalsrus".

## Cloud's Jamboree Jan. 15 & 16 in Laughlin, NV

Cloud's Jamboree.. Rock, Gem, Arts-Crafts & Mineral Show at the Avi Resort & Casino, Laughlin, Nevada. Outdoor show January 1-31 9 am to dusk at Avi Resort RV Park. Indoor show January 7-16 10am - 6pm at Avi Convention Center. The Mt. San Antonio College Jewelry and Lapidary class will host an overnight bus trip to Clouds Jamboree. Leaving from the San Dimas area early Saturday, the 15<sup>th</sup>, and returning Sunday evening the 16<sup>th</sup> before the MLK Monday Holiday. Fare, including room is \$99 per person (double occupancy in 2 queen bed room) and \$129 (single room). Seats are limited. Contact Mark Nelson to reserve a spot. Email: [mnelsonair@aol.com](mailto:mnelsonair@aol.com) or Phone: (909) 592-1322.

## Quartzsite Shows this Month

There will be some of the best rock and gem shows in the country this month at Quartzsite, Arizona. The Pow-Wow and Desert Gardens are a great place to pick rough and finished gems and minerals. See the January Shows on Page 7 for a complete list of all the shows and details.

**Famous Opals: The Galaxy - The World's Largest Polished Opal**

**A Superb Double-sided Gemstone Specimen Comes to Steven Sodokoff Jewelry. Appears ethereal with shimmering molten rainbows smoldering just beneath pearly blue ice.**

Since 1992, when it was first certified by "The Guinness Book of Records", 'Galaxy' has earned the distinction of still being **The World's Largest Polished Opal**. October's birthstone treats the eye to an explosion of shimmering colors, not unlike the spectral dance of the northern lights; the Aurora Borealis. Shakespeare in "Twelfth Night" called the opal "that miracle and the Queen of Gems" so 'Galaxy' opal is the 'King of Stones', weighing approximately

1 lb. 10 oz. (0.75 kg) and measures 5-1/2 x 4 x 1-5/8 ins. (14.0 x 10.2 x 4.1 cm). Bob Kammerling, universally respected editor for the quarterly journal of the Gemological Institute of America (G.I.A.), "Gems and Gemology", describes 'Galaxy' in the 1990 Winter issue as an "exceptionally large gem-quality opal... [that] displays a predominantly pinfire play-of-color across its entire surface ... [and] appears gemmy throughout...."



*The Galaxy Opal © (Photo by Harold and Erica Van Pelt)*

'Galaxy' an exceptional translucent gem-quality, mineraloid of high-fire light crystal base is significant for its size and thickness as well as for its exceptional iridescent fire and beauty. 'Galaxy' was carefully excavated by hand from clay near quartzitic sandstone cliffs at Boi Morto Mine, 3.5 km NNW of Pedro II, in northeast Brazil in 1976, in the state of Piauí and is the

paramount specimen from this locality and the world. Beginning with a grapefruit-sized piece of rough weighing 5,205 carats, gem cutter Scott Cooley sculpted this one-of-a-kind specimen to resemble a child's head now weighing approximately 3,749 carats, (1 lb. 10 oz.). The weight of the finished stone was beyond the capacity of any gem measuring scale at the G.I.A. and an approximation of its weight in carats had to be determined using a postal scale.

This utterly magnificent sculptured slab-like specimen, fairly uniform in thickness at 1-5/8" (44.0 mm), is extremely well polished all around. Veins of opal displaying a 'play-of-color' (an interplay of diffracting wavelengths), are often quite thin, fragile and are on a host stone. This opal's stunning luminous crown is mostly a lively broad-flash pattern, with patches of color 0.5 - 1.5 mm wide showing a radiant fountain of fiery orange-reds, cool phosphorescent lime-yellow-greens and electric flashes of violet shot through with glimmering flecks of gold. Viewed from the side, a harlequin-type pattern is displayed with distinctive sedimentary banding. By tilting the opal towards a light source, generates a lustrous medley of ever-changing colors that ebb and flow as the gem is rotated and angled in relation to the light source. From the obverse side a lively green-



*The Galaxy Opal © (Photo by Deborah Welsh)*

blue pinfire appears showing no trace of potch or crazing to interrupt the symmetry of the effect.

Stones of this size, with color play on both sides and without fractures, are very rare indeed". It has been estimated that 'Galaxy' a talisman irresistible to the touch, began its 22 million year trek to lustrous beauty when dinosaurs still roamed the earth. The finer specimens of Piauí's opals have been mistaken for the best from Australia, similar to those mined at Coober Pedy. Brazilian gem opal has been found to contain only about 5.7% water content compared to other locations containing 10% - 20%. The importance of this is that the Brazilian opal is not likely to crack due to exposure to sunlight or heat. It has also been noted that Brazilian Opal is slightly harder than most opals making it more durable for jewelry use.

To truly comprehend the uniqueness of 'Galaxy', this unparalleled, one-of-a-kind museum quality specimen, it must be experienced firsthand and touched. This offering presents a rare opportunity for the most serious collector to acquire a legendary world-class gemstone. Steven Sodokoff, a fourth-generation dealer of rare gems and estate jewelry, will be pleased to schedule a viewing.

**Published References:**

- 10/21/81 - Gemological Institute Of America (G.I.A) Certificate #3911162
- Winter 1990 - G.I.A. *Gems and Gemology*, Volume 26, No. 4
- March 1991 - *Jewelers Circular Keystone*
- October 1991 - *Jewellery News Asia* , No. 86
- 1992 - *The Guinness Book of Records*, Page 26
- Contact: **Steven Sodokoff** - (415) 647-1860, [Steve@Sodokoff.com](mailto:Steve@Sodokoff.com)

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**Silver Bullets?**

**Promoting Your Society Attracting New Members**

*By Elizabeth Myers*

If you want to grow your society, what are the tools that your society uses to promote itself? Consider these:

- **Newspaper advertising** - In the classified section of your local newspaper, do you have an ad in the meetings portion reflecting the date, time and location of your monthly meetings? Does it list a contact telephone number?
- **Telephone** - Does your society have a designated, locally listed telephone number to call for questions and information? This

could be tied to an answering machine, with a member responsible for returning calls. The cost per month is very reasonable and provides a lot of "stature" and "stability" to your organization.

- **Handouts** - What sort of handouts do you have to distribute to someone who may be interested in joining (or just learning more about) your society?
- **Postcards** - You can make your own "Got Rocks?" postcards which are pre-addressed to your society? mailing address. All that needed is the "sender's" name, address and telephone number and a postage stamp. With permission, these postcards can be left at libraries, chambers of commerce, select businesses (such as rock shops).
- **Fliers** - You can print "bi-folds," "tri-folds" or other such literature containing information about your Society for distribution at shows and to provide to prospective members.
- **Displays** - would your local library, community center or county offices allow you to display rocks, gems, fossils and other items in their foyers?
- **Internet** - Do you have a website? Is it updated regularly?
- **Subscriptions** - How about contacting your local library and donating a subscription to Rock and Gem Magazine (or other such publication)? The library would greatly appreciate the donation; your society would receive the recognition; and new readers could be introduced to rockhounding.
- **Replies** - How do you respond to "inquiries" about your society? Consider sending an "acknowledgement letter" thanking the sender for their interest, a copy of a recent society newsletter, an application for membership (with a return envelope) and some literature (e.g. tri-fold, bi-fold, etc.) and inviting them to attend an upcoming general membership meeting.

These are just a few of the ways that "growing" societies continue to expand their membership. If you would like more "details" or to serve on the committee, I love to hear from you.

*Reprint from C.F.M.S. Newsletter XLVI #1 January 2010*

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## Diamond-Wrongs

*By Dr. Bill Cordua, University of Wisconsin-River Falls*

Recently a student of mine, who had been looking for a gift for his girl friend, asked me if Herkimer "diamonds" were a particularly good diamonds. After explaining to him that Herkimer "diamonds" were really quartz, I began thinking about all the things rock hounds and jewelers call diamonds that are really diamond-wrongs. Sometimes this is an innocent practice (as in Herkimer "diamonds"), but it can be meant to mislead shoppers. In all cases it creates confusion and is sloppy nomenclature. Here are some of the diamond "wrongs" I found on-line and what they REALLY are. Caveat emptor!

Herkimer diamonds are quartz crystals found in vugs in dolostone in central New York. They are often sharply terminated, water clear and sparkly against the grey dolostone or black bitumen matrix, but they aren't diamonds. Little Falls "diamonds" and Middleville "diamonds" are synonyms, named after several towns in the collecting area - obfuscation taken to the second level of confusion.

Other clear quartz rock crystals that have been called diamonds are Alencon "diamonds", Cape May "diamonds", Hawaiian "diamonds", German "diamonds", Pecos "diamonds", Herradura "diamonds", Mexican "diamonds" and on and on. I had heard of Cape May "diamonds" when I was a kid. They refer to rounded pebbles of clear to white quartz picked up along the beaches around Cape May, New Jersey. Their source was the crystalline rocks in the upper reaches of the Delaware River. River and wave transport have rounded and sculpted them, making them popular among east coast beachcombers. Pecos diamonds come from outcrops along the Pecos River in southeastern New Mexico not far from Roswell. They

often have a unique orange color, and are associated with cavities in gypsum-bearing limestone and dolostone. But, pretty as these are, they aren't diamonds.

Colorado "diamond" can refer to smoky quartz. Radium "diamond" is also smoky quartz. Since quartz can be made smoky artificially by exposure to radiation, some of these specimens may not only be misnamed, but also faked. Alaskan "diamond" is similarly a type of quartz rock crystal. Unless you find Alaskan "black diamond" which is polished hematite. Yes it sparkles, but iron oxide is hardly the same as pure carbon. The Russians taught the native Aleuts how to cut and polish this material, which was highly thought of enough to serve as royal gifts. These are beautiful enough in their own right that one wonders why it as necessary to give it a gaudy name. In addition there is a Nevada "black diamond", but that is obsidian, a volcanic glass. Of course there is a real black diamond - a bizarre form also called carbonado, which may be extraterrestrial in origin.

Matura "diamond" is refers to colorless zircon, which is found in the gem gravels of Sri Lanka. Zircon does have an adamantine luster, so clear varieties tend to resemble diamonds in their brilliance. However they do have inferior hardness, and are zirconium silicate, not carbon. Be also aware the zircon is not the same as cubic zirconium an artificial product often used as an inexpensive diamond substitute.

Mogok "diamond", Saxon "diamond", Killiecrankie "diamond", Tasmania "diamond" and Flinder's "diamond" are white topaz. Killiecrankie is on Flinder's Island off of Tasmania, so the last three terms refer to the same thing. These are topaz from granite, that have worn been loose and turn up in beach gravels. Topaz is a hard lustrous mineral to be sure, but these rank only an 8 on the Mohs scale, not 10 and are not as rare. They also lack the brilliance of diamond's luster. Probably the most ironic of these misnomers is Alpine "diamond" which turns out to be pyrite. Some one buying this thus gets no diamond, but instead a shiny specimen of fool's gold.

Here are some good on-line references about misleading mineral names:

<http://www.gemscape.com/html/misnomer.htm>

and

[http://www.jewelinfo4u.com/Beware\\_of\\_Misleading\\_gemstone\\_names.aspx](http://www.jewelinfo4u.com/Beware_of_Misleading_gemstone_names.aspx)

The American Federation of Mineralogical Societies has a useful list of approved names for lapidary labels:

[http://www.amfed.org/rules/AFMS\\_Lapidary\\_Material\\_Names\\_2003.pdf](http://www.amfed.org/rules/AFMS_Lapidary_Material_Names_2003.pdf)

I have a fond memory of the 1995 movie "Congo". In it, a team of adventurers finds King Solomon's diamond mines (guarded, of course, by killer apes). The floor of the "diamond" mine is shown littered with Arkansas quartz crystals ("Arkansas diamonds"), which are being gleefully gathered in by the villain as the apes attack. Was King Solomon duped by unscrupulous labeling? By the way, in the movie the villain's name was "Herkermer".

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## The Opal in Myth and Folklore

*By Isabel Salmon, New Haven Mineral Club*

I first fell in love with opals when I saw my mom's engagement ring. My mom didn't like diamonds so my dad gave her a white fire opal, her favorite stone. I also love mythology, so I decided to research opals. Some stones, like peridot, have a lack of ancient lore, but opals have the opposite problem!

Etymology: Opal may originate form the Sanskrit upala: "precious stone" via the Greek opallios. Pliny the Elder called opal opallus. It was called opalus in Latin during the Roman Empire. It was a very expensive gemstone that ranked second only to the emerald back then. It was also considered to be a stone of hope, or a lucky stone, due to its mysterious rainbow fire. The ancient Romans called it cupid paederos, "child beautiful as love," and regarded it as a symbol of hope and purity. Opals were thought to

possess the virtues of all the stones whose colors appear there. The Roman Senator Nonius so valued a large opal he possessed that he chose exile rather than surrender the stone to Mark Antony. In Greek mythology, opal was formed from the tears of joy that Zeus wept after defeating the Titans. Many ancient Greeks believed opals gave the gift of foresight and prophecy.

In Arabic lore, it was believed that opals fell from the skies in lightning flashes which gave them their fire as captured lightning. Falling from heaven made opals sacred, and wearing them could make their wearer invisible.

In Indian lore, opal was formed when the Goddess of Rainbows was turned to stone while fleeing from the advances of other gods. A similar legend from India told that the gods Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva fell in love with the same woman, and bestowed upon her the colors blue, gold and red to distinguish her as their own. She died, and the Eternal took pity on her and transformed her into an opal stone with all three colors.

In Australia, many aborigines believed that opal is a half-serpent, half-human devil lurking in the ground, using colorful flashes of magic to lure them to their deaths. However, there is also a legend that a huge opal controls the stars and human love, even the gold in the ground. Another aboriginal legend states that the thunder-spirit, jealous of the rainbow's beauty, shattered it into opal.

In Europe in the Middle Ages, it was believed that opal could make one invisible, and was nicknamed patronus forum ("patron of thieves"). In medieval Europe, opal was believed to maintain a strong heart, prevent infection, and cleanse the air. However, after the Black Death began to sweep across the continent, the opal was sometimes believed to be the cause of death because it changed in appearance and luster. Because the stone is heat-sensitive, it would react to body temperature changes.

It is not surprising that many years later, Shakespeare would use the opal as a symbol of unpredictability and inconstancy: "Now, the melancholy god protect thee, and the tailor make thy doublet of changeable taffeta, for thy mind is a very opal" – Twelfth Night, Act 2 Scene 4.

It seems that it wasn't until the nineteenth century in Europe that the opal became known as an ill omen and became connected with misfortunes of royalty. A specifically French superstition has the opal as a jinx. The origin of this story is the fragility of the stone: lapidaries and jewelers were punished if they damaged the stones, and the frequency with which opals broke made them feel that opal had bad luck attached to it.

In more recent times, it has been considered unlucky to wear opal if it isn't your birthstone. This belief seems to trace back to Sir Walter Scott's novel Ann of Gerstein, where the protagonist has her life force, or soul, trapped in a cursed opal.

In 2005 I was able to travel to Australia and New Zealand as a student ambassador. A high point of my trip was the opportunity to visit an opal mine and store. When I viewed the specimens of white and black opal, it was easy to imagine how such a magical, mysterious stone could inspire so much myth and legend.

Sources:

- <http://www.worldwidegems.net/products/opal.htm>
- <http://www.ellensteiber.com/thestones.htm>
- <http://www.unicorns-garden.com/info/cabinfogo.html>
- <http://wyrldology.com/stones/natural/opal.html>
- <http://www.suevematsu.com/opal.html>
- <http://www.cedarseed.com/air/gemstones.html>

From: Triassic Valley Bulletin, 1/07. (5th Place – 2008 AFMS Junior Articles, 12 – 17), Via <http://www.mineralsocal.org/>

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## The Darvaza Well

In the middle of the Karakoum (Turkmenistan) desert, close to the disappeared village called Darvaza, there is a crater of about one hundred meters of diameter and more than twenty meters of depth, called "the hell's door". Inside this well, a fire has been burning for dozens of years, a fire that looks endless. The Darvaza

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well is not a work of nature, but the result of an unfortunate soviet mining prospect started in the 50's. In 1971, a drilling provoked the collapse of an underground cavity, so revealing a gaping hole leaking enormous quantities of gas. The geologists decided to torch the well to eliminate such toxic gas. The soviets grossly underestimated the dimensions of the cavity: the gas that should have burned out within a few weeks has actually kept burning without interruption since 1971! It is unknown for how long "the hell's door" will keep on burning.

Even though the well of Darvaza is located in a region difficult to access, a lot of people gather there to observe this fascinating phenomenon. The intense heat coming from the crater allows



*Darvaza Well – during the day.*

approach to the place only for a few minutes because of the unbearable temperature. At night the show is Dantean: the fire burns in all its magnificence, giving the well the look of a volcanic burning crater.

From [http://www.mineralsocal.org/bulletin/2010/2010\\_jul.htm](http://www.mineralsocal.org/bulletin/2010/2010_jul.htm)

Editor's note: Mr. Richard Horstmeyer would like to share the following entry about Darvaza Well with others. The pictures were part of a slides show. The story was from the caption of each picture.

(from [www.slideshare.net/ngwk/the-darvaza-well-2758643](http://www.slideshare.net/ngwk/the-darvaza-well-2758643))



*Darvaza Well –at night with the glow of the burning fires.*

## Pala's Featured Stones: Prase Opal from Tanzania

This month we feature prase opal from some recently unearthed veins on Mount Iyobo in central Tanzania. Prase opal is a nickel-bearing variety of common opal, with nickel being the chromophore that illuminates the neon bluish-green hue.

Chrysoprase and prase opal can be similar in appearance but can easily be separated by varying RI and SG. Both varieties range from low-quality opaque material to high-quality translucent jewels; however, the prase opal tends to be more translucent and gemmy. Pala International just recently purchased some



*Tanzanian treat. A glowing prase opal cabochon showing the most pure and intense color; 11.80 carats, 16 x 12.6 x 9 mm (Photo: Jason Stephenson)*

of the fascinating prase opal rough while at this year's Tucson show.

Chrysoprase and prase opal have been mined on Iyobo Mountain in central Tanzania for more than 20 years, with the first accounts being described by Gübelin in 1975. The most recent discovery revealed some of the most intense and beautiful bluish green

material to be seen by the gem trade. The majority of the production is in the chrysoprase form, while the prase opal is the more rare find from this deposit. Chrysoprase and prase opal both form in discontinuous veins within metamorphosed ultramafic rocks with the most dominant host rock being altered serpentine.

From [http://www.palagems.com/gem\\_news\\_2010\\_v1.php](http://www.palagems.com/gem_news_2010_v1.php).



*Goody goody gum drops. An assortment of the prase opal cabs with a chunk of rough showing the gem vein and the surrounding matrix. (Photo: Jason Stephenson)*

## 2010 Opal & Gem Show Dealers

Below is contact information for our dealers from the 2010 Opal & Gem Show.

Business	Telephone	E-mail	Website
AmeriAsian Business Corp	(626) 569-0561	ameri_asian@yahoo.com	
Australian Opal	(310) 318-2170	lesneff@aol.com	
Australian Opal Imports	(562) 621-1805	fineblackopal@sprynet.com	<a href="http://www.australianopalimports.com">http://www.australianopalimports.com</a>
Burton's Gems & Opals	(714) 827-5680	gemsandopals@earthlink.net	
C - R.A.M. Associates	(408) 568-2018	CaRam67@aol.com	<a href="http://www.VisionsByRon.com">http://www.VisionsByRon.com</a>
Casa De Lumbre	(408) 926-7261	zrchavez@sbcglobal.net	
Custom Creative Gem Cutting	(714) 220-9282	custom-creative@earthlink.net	<a href="http://home.earthlink.net/~custom-creative/">http://home.earthlink.net/~custom-creative/</a>
De Boer's Gemstone Treasures	(949) 929-1484	precan@yahoo.com	
Fantastic Stone Corp.	(626) 927-9898	chunlin@aol.com	<a href="http://www.chinesemf.com/index2.php">http://www.chinesemf.com/index2.php</a>
Gem World, Inc.	(909) 608-1620	Gems@gemworldinc.com	<a href="http://www.gemworldinc.com">http://www.gemworldinc.com</a>
Lasco Diamond Products	(818) 882-2423	donna@lascodiamond.com	<a href="http://www.lascodiamond.com">http://www.lascodiamond.com</a>
Los Laureles Opals Mex	(510) 393-6573	laurelesopalsmex@yahoo.com	
No Stone Left Unturned	(714) 501-5988	m1in8873@yahoo.com	
Opal Artistry	(714) 553-3983	riskashbrook@hotmail.com	
Opal of the Southern Lights	(562) 277-8288	craig@OpalOfAustralia.com	<a href="http://www.opalofaustralia.com/">http://www.opalofaustralia.com/</a>
Owyhee Sunset Mines	(208) 337-3521		
Petersen Opals and Fine Jewelry	(386) 801-4661	PetersenOpals@yahoo.com	<a href="http://www.petersenopals.vpweb.com">http://www.petersenopals.vpweb.com</a>
Santiago Canyon College	(714) 893-6643	ovdiamonds@aol.com	<a href="http://www.sccollege.edu/apps/comm.asp?Q=65">http://www.sccollege.edu/apps/comm.asp?Q=65</a>
Savings Unlimited Gems & Minerals	(805) 212-4094	daleswisebuys@verizon.net	
Starlite Jewelry	(951) 678-4616	starlitejewelry@live.com	<a href="http://Starlite-Jewelry.com">http://Starlite-Jewelry.com</a>
Tikka Opals	61-7-55469324	mattitikka@bigpond.com.au	
Toledo Fine Art Jewelry	(562) 944-6822	toledowildlife@aol.com	<a href="http://www.natureartists.com/daniel_toledo.asp">http://www.natureartists.com/daniel_toledo.asp</a>
Utopoian Opal	(619) 282-1700	utopianopal@gmail.com	
Walter Johnson		donnawalt@earthlink.net	

# Rare Meteorite Discovered In Rural Southern Oregon

By Richard Cockle, *The Oregonian*, 9/21/2010

It rattled around in an old Folgers can for 30 years in Paul Albertson's Lakeview garage before he found out what it really was - an interplanetary space traveler. Now, the thumb-size Fitzwater Pass meteorite that he picked up in 1976 while hunting for agates and jasper is generating interest from scientists worldwide. Only the sixth meteorite found in Oregon and the second discovered east of the Oregon Cascades, it's "a small, iron meteorite, and it's one of the rare types of iron," said Dick Pugh a scientist with the Cascadia Meteorite Laboratory at Portland State University. Chemical analysis has determined that the 63.6 gram (about 2 ounces) space rock belongs to the IIIF iron meteorite group, which includes only eight other recognized meteorites across the globe, said Lyn Craig of Fossil, executive director of the nonprofit Libraries of Eastern Oregon. The libraries, with funding help from NASA, have sponsored Pugh to speak to more than four dozen public libraries in 15 eastern Oregon counties over the past year or two.

Albertson, 58, a retired postal worker, got his first fateful glimpse of the burned and cratered little meteorite while rock hunting 20 miles southwest of Lakeview in the Fitzwater Pass area. He remembers that it first appeared to be part of a broken axle from a frontier-era wagon. "When I picked it up, I thought it was a piece of a wagon hub," he said. "There used to be a wagon trail in that area." Albertson took it to a local rock shop and was told it was worthless nickel ore. He tossed it into a coffee can, where it remained with some arrowheads, fossils and pottery shards for the next three decades. He got an inkling that it might be something more when he attended a lecture on meteorites by Pugh at the Lake County Public Library in 2006.

After Pugh had a long look at it, Albertson agreed to provide a slice of less than an ounce to PSU. It was carefully scrutinized by Alex Ruzicka and Melinda Hutson of the meteorite laboratory and Stephen Kissin of Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada. They ruled it was indeed a meteorite, and an uncommon one at that. The delayed discovery is attracting a lot of attention to the rugged high desert and mountains where Albertson found the rock. "We're looking for more pieces associated with Fitzwater Pass," Pugh said in a statement. "We don't know for sure whether this is a single or multiple meteorite fall. There is no way of knowing unless other pieces are found."

Pugh believes other Oregonians probably have unknowingly picked up meteorite chunks and they're even now languishing "on shelves, in basements, barns and workshops" around the state. "I hope to flush out more in the years to come," he said. Earlier this year, another hunk of space rock was officially recognized as the Morrow County meteorite-also after making its way to Pugh and the meteorite lab when its owner got curious about its origins. It, too, had been found years earlier, but was stashed in a rock garden and then under a barbecue on a deck in Washington state. The thing about meteorites, Craig said, is they're rare and not-so-rare at the same time. Some scientists believe at least one meteorite could be found in every square mile in eastern Oregon, she said.

Moreover, there's money in meteorites. A 2007 New York City auction dedicated to meteorites attracted buyers from across the United States, Europe and Australia who spent a total of \$750,000. A 219-pound piece of space rock found in Siberia and described in the auction catalog as "sexy" brought \$122,750, and a mailbox from Georgia that was hit by a meteorite in 1984 commanded \$82,750. "I'm not interested in selling it, even if I could get a million dollars for it," Albertson said of his meteorite. He wants to keep what's left of it, about 44.2 grams, intact. "It needs to stay in Lakeview as an attraction for the community," he said. Meanwhile, Albertson has been out looking for more meteorites and thinks he's got some good leads. "I have people telling me about these big fireballs in the sky,"

he said. "You have got to listen to that stuff . . . I'm always looking. Everybody should be looking."

*From Hill and Gully November 2010, Via Palomar Gem, 1/2011*

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## January 2010 Gem & Mineral Shows

More shows can be found at

<http://www.rockngem.com/showdates.asp>

1-31—QUARTZSITE, AZ: Show, "Desert Gardens International Gem & Mineral Show"; Desert Gardens RV Park; 1064 Kuehn St. (I-10 Exit 17, south side); 9-6 daily; free admission; crystals, minerals, rough, polished, jewelry, lapidary equipment; contact Sharon or Sandy, 1064 Kuehn St., Quartzsite, AZ 85346, (928) 927-6361; e-mail: info@desertgardensrvpark.net; Web site: www.desertgardensrvpark.net

7-9—DEL MAR, CA: Show; Gem Faire Inc.; Del Mar Fairgrounds/Bing Crosby Hall, 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

14-16—GLOBE, AZ: 54th annual show; Gila Co. Gem & Mineral Society; Gila County Fair Grounds, 3 mi. north of US 60-70 Junction; Fri. 9-5, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; live demonstrations, door prizes, displays, minerals, jewelry; contact Val Lathem, (602) 466-3060; e-mail: val65@cox.net

15 & 16 in Laughlin, NV - Cloud's Jamboree.. Rock, Gem, Arts-Crafts & Mineral Show at the Avi Resort & Casino, Laughlin, Nevada. Outdoor show January 1-31 9 am to dusk at Avi Resort RV Park. Indoor show January 7-16 10am - 6pm at Avi Convention Center.. Email: mnelsonair@aol.com or Phone: (909) 592-1322.

14-16—SANTA ROSA, CA: Show; Gem Faire Inc.; Sonoma County Fairgrounds/Grace Pavilion, 1350 Bennett Valley Rd.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail:

28-30—REDLANDS, CA: Annual symposium; Mineralogical Society of Southern CA Micromounters; San Bernardino County Museum, 2024 Orange Tree; giveaway tables, mineral sales, silent and live auctions, speakers, field trip; contact Eugene Reynolds, (714) 697-4435, or Dr. Robert Housley; e-mail: rhousley@its.caltech.edu; or Gene Reynolds; e-mail: garquartzman@hotmail.com

28-30—SAN RAFAEL, CA: Show; Gem Faire Inc.; Marin Center/Exhibit Hall, 10 Avenue of the Flags; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

27-12—TUCSON, AZ: Show; Eons Expositions LLC; 600 22nd St., northeast corner of I-10 and 22nd St.; 9-7 daily; free admission; minerals, fossils, rough, gems, jewelry, amber, meteorites; contact Lowell Carhart, 7514 Antelope Meadows Circle, Peyton, CO 80831, (516) 818-1228; e-mail: lowellcarhart@yahoo.com; Web site: www.22ndStreetShow.com

28-13—TUCSON, AZ: Show; ColorWright; ColorWright Warehouse, 1201 N. Main Ave.; 10-6 daily; free admission; cutting and carving rough, slabs, cabochons, gemology equipment, fossils, fossil preparation equipment, Covington lapidary equipment, new Highland Park slab saws, books, jewelry; contact Rob Kulakofsky, 1201 N. Main Ave., Tucson, AZ 85705, (520) 792-1439; e-mail: rk3@color-wright.com; Web site: www.rglshow.com

29-12—TUCSON, AZ: Show, "AZ Mineral & Fossil Show"; Martin Zinn Expositions; The Hotel Tucson City Center (formerly InnSuites), 475 N. Granada; 10-6 daily, final day 10-5; free admission; more than 400 dealers, Artists' Gallery, four locations, free shuttle; contact Martin Zinn Expositions, P.O. Box 665, Bernalillo, NM 87004-0665; e-mail: mzexpos@aol.com; Web site: www.mzexpos.com

29-12—TUCSON, AZ: Show, "AZ Mineral & Fossil Show"; Martin Zinn Expositions; The Mineral & Fossil Marketplace, 1333 N. Oracle Rd.; 10-6 daily, final day 10-5; free admission; more than 400 dealers, four locations, free shuttle; contact Martin Zinn Expositions, P.O. Box 665, Bernalillo, NM 87004-0665; e-mail: mzexpos@aol.com; Web site: www.mzexpos.com

29-12—TUCSON, AZ: Show, "AZ Mineral & Fossil Show"; Martin Zinn Expositions; Quality Inn-Benson Hwy., 1025 E. Benson Hwy.; 10-6 daily, final day 10-5; free admission; more than 400 dealers, four locations, free shuttle; contact Martin Zinn Expositions, P.O. Box 665, Bernalillo, NM 87004-0665; e-mail: mzexpos@aol.com; Web site: www.mzexpos.com

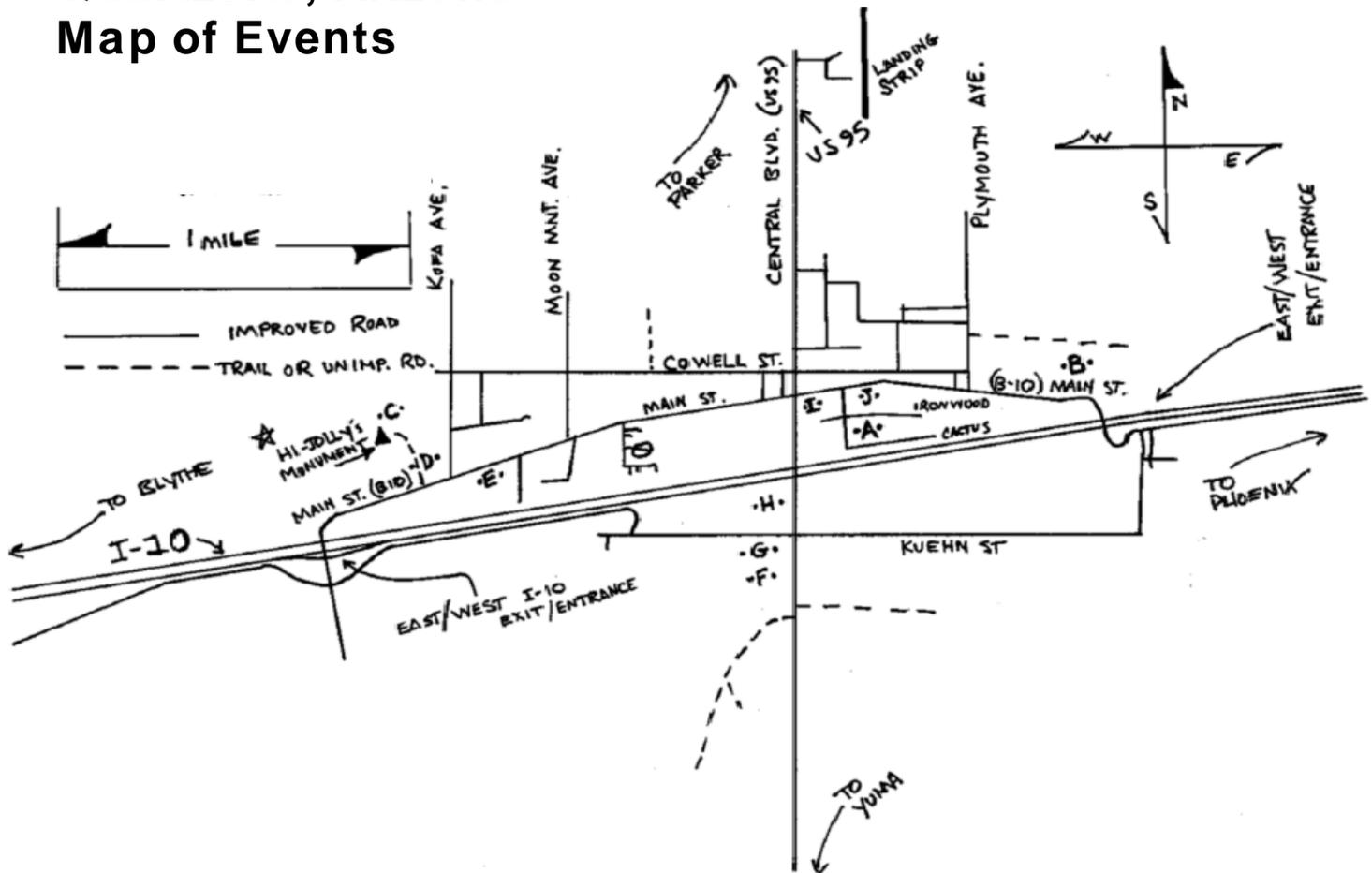
29-12—TUCSON, AZ: Show, "AZ Mineral & Fossil Show"; Martin Zinn Expositions; Ramada Ltd., 665 N. Freeway; 10-6 daily, final day 10-5; free admission; more than 400 dealers, four locations, free shuttle; contact Martin Zinn Expositions, P.O. Box 665, Bernalillo, NM 87004-0665; e-mail: mzexpos@aol.com; Web site: www.mzexpos.com

31-6—TUCSON, AZ: Wholesale show; AZ Global Gem & Jewelry; The Hotel AZ, 181 W. Broadway; Mon. 10-6, Tue. 10-6, Wed. 10-6, Thu. 10-6, Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-6; contact Ron Swanson, (520) 396-4469; e-mail: ron@aggjs.com; Web site: www.aggjs.com

## Quartzsite Shows for 2011

Show	Address	Phone	Date	Map Location
Desert Gardens Gem & Mineral	PO Box 619 Quartzsite, AZ 85346	928-927-5555	Jan 1 - Feb 28	Map Look below the E; South of I-10 on access road (West side Kuehn St)
Hi Jolly Daze Parade	PO Box 85 Quartzsite, AZ 85346	928-927-5600	Jan 8	Map ref C
45 <sup>th</sup> Annual Quartzsite Pow Wow Gem & Mineral Show	PO Box 881 Quartzsite, AZ 85346	928-927-6325	Jan 19 - Jan 23	Map ref A
The Main Event	PO Box 2801 Quartzsite, AZ 85346	928 -927-5213	Jan 8 - Jan 23	Map ref D
Rice Ranch "Yawl Come Show" Bluegrass Festival at Rice Ranch		928-927-8118	Nov 1 - Feb 28 Feb 23 - Feb 25	Map Look below the A on Kuehn St
Tyson Wells Rock & Gem Show Tyson Wells Sell-A-Rama Tyson Wells Arts & Crafts Fair	<a href="http://www.tysonwells.com">www.tysonwells.com</a> PO Box 60 Quartzsite, AZ 85346	928-927-6364	Jan 7 - Jan 16 Jan 21 - Jan 31 Feb 4 - Feb 13	Map ref H
Vacation & R V Show Roll Classic Car Show Hobby Craft & Gem Show	4952 Warner Ave, Suite 203 Huntington Beach CA 92649	800-969-5464	Jan 22 - Jan 30 Feb 5 - Feb 6 Jan 2 - Feb 6	Map ref F
8th Annual "It's Chili In Quartzsite" Chili Cook-Off & State Salsa Championship			Feb 26	
Prospector's Panorama	PO Box 786 Quartzsite, AZ 85346	928-927-6467	Nov 1 - Feb 28	Map ref G

## Quartzsite, Arizona Map of Events



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[Australian Opal Imports.com](http://AustralianOpalImports.com)

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custom-creative@earthlink.net](http://home.earthlink.net/~custom-creative/custom-creative@earthlink.net)  
Tuesday-Saturday 10am-3pm. Appointments Also Available

**CLEARANCE**  
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**Total purchase over \$5000 – 60% off**

**Discount is off of normal retail price**

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# American Opal Society Membership Application

FILL IN APPLICABLE INFORMATION		DUES / FEES)	AMOUNT PAID
DUES: SELECT ONE	RENEWING MEMBERS	\$30	
	NEW MEMBERS	\$40	
INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP FEE (All addresses <u>outside</u> of USA)		\$10	
PRINTED NEWSLETTER FEE (Paper copy postal mailed instead of PDF file by e-mail)		\$5	
ADDITIONAL BADGES (Your First Badge is <u>free</u> when joining)		\$10	
TOTAL PAID DUES plus International, Print or Badge Fees if Applicable:			

Please make check or money order payable to "**American Opal Society**". Mail payment and application to:  
**American Opal Society; PO BOX 4875; Garden Grove, CA 92842-4875**  
 An optional, quicker method of payment is via the **Internet**. To pay, just visit the membership page on our website at [http://opalsociety.org/aos\\_application\\_by\\_web.htm](http://opalsociety.org/aos_application_by_web.htm) and complete the form. You may pay with a **Credit Card** or via **PayPal** account. The transaction is completely secure and the AOS never sees your credit card number. The AOS PayPal account is [membership@opalsociety.org](mailto:membership@opalsociety.org).

NAME		
BUSINESS NAME		
ADDRESS		APT # or PO BOX
CITY		STATE
ZIP or POSTAL CODE		COUNTRY (IF OUTSIDE USA)
PHONE - Home ( )	PHONE - Business ( )	FAX ( )
E-MAIL		
WEBSITE		
OCCUPATION		HOBBIES AND INTERESTS

**NAME BADGE ORDER FORM:**  
 PLEASE PRINT NAME AS YOU WISH IT TO APPEAR ON YOUR BADGE using up to two (2) lines of text for your name, nickname, or name of your opal related business.

**MEMBERSHIP ROSTER:** The AOS publishes a membership directory once per year in its Newsletter, the *Opal Express*. Your name will be included. Please check what additional personal information that you want listed for other members. If it is different from the information above, please note that on the application.

- Address   
  Phone   
  E-mail   
  Website

Please sign here: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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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  
Garden Grove, CA 92842-4875

**Volume #44 Issue #1  
January 2011**

### Some Topics In This Issue:

- Cloud's Jamboree Jan. 15 & 16
- Famous Opals - The Galaxy
- Promoting Your Society
- Diamond-Wrongs
- The Opal in Myth and Folklore
- The Darvaza Well
- Prase Opal from Tanzania
- 2010 Opal & Gem Show Dealers
- Rare Meteorite Discovered In Oregon
- Quartzsite Shows for 2011

### Important Dates:

#### January 13 - General Meeting

Will Shaw will present a sneak preview of a new Gemsmith prototype for opal and gem cutters, and requests you bring some opal potch or expendable 10-25 mm stones and some lucky cutter or two can "take the wheel" after the business 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)

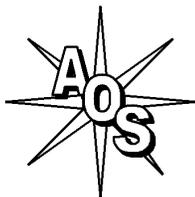
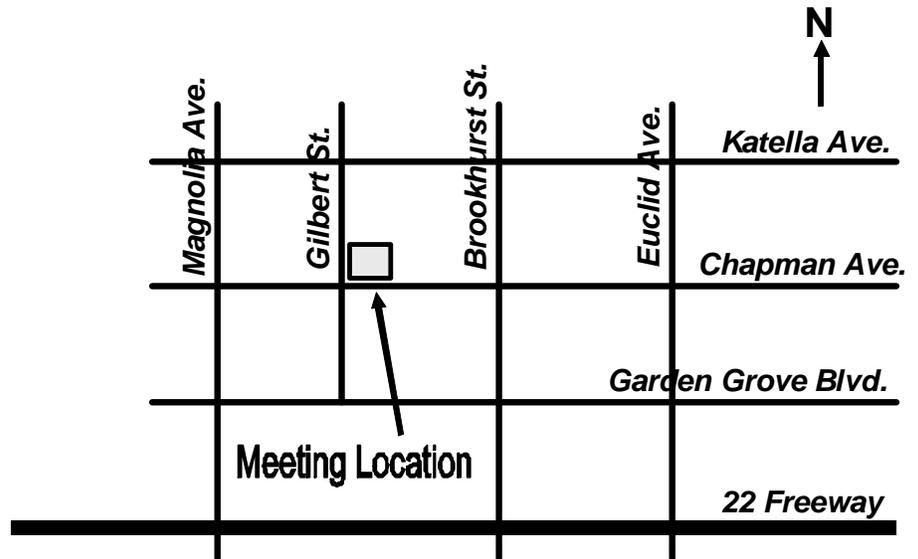
#### MEETING ACTIVITIES

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

TO:

## January 13th

## **Will Shaw will present a sneak preview of a new Gemsmith prototype Lapidary Machine**



## The American Opal Society

<http://OpalSociety.org>

Pete Goetz	President	(714) 530-3530	email: <a href="mailto:mpg1022@aol.com">mpg1022@aol.com</a>
LaVerne Christenson	Treasurer	(714) 531-4041	email: <a href="mailto:laverne@socal.rr.com">laverne@socal.rr.com</a>
Jim Pisani	Editor & Webmaster	(714) 815-4638	email: <a href="mailto:editor@opalsociety.org">editor@opalsociety.org</a>
Gene LeVan	Show Chairman	(562) 208-7494	email: <a href="mailto:fineblackopal@sprynet.com">fineblackopal@sprynet.com</a>