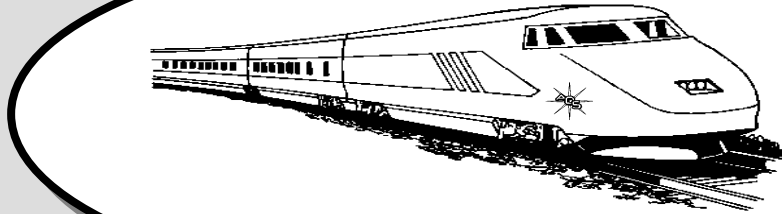


The Opal Express

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President's Message

By Pete Goetz

Hello fellow Opalholics, not much going on in March, its 'kinda-like' our doldrums: Details from last year are finally done, and we take a little breather. Then in April we will start our preparation for the 2012 Opal Show, arrange for a new staff (still need a Treasurer), and try to get a little OPAL education out to the public. This year we plan to make a presentation at the Anaheim Arts Council's monthly meeting in addition to our now infamous FREE Opal Seminars presented at the annual Opal Show.

The month of March is usually associated with St Patrick which usually reminds me of the color green which brings me to this month's General meeting "whew", all that to say this month's lecture is all about Green (???). Green (?) Jade that is, and is being provided by the one, the only 'Jademan' himself, Jim Pisani!!! I have seen some of what Jim has to say. I think everyone will learn something new about Jade. So, gather your friends and come on down! and let's talk some Jade (Oh and OPAL too). Sorry OPAL.

The American Opal Society will be providing refreshments for one of the General Meetings of the Anaheim Arts Council this Fall. I will be looking for some volunteers to help me setup the table. Also, (AH-OH, hear it comes you say?) - It would be nice if some of you folks would be willing to provide a plate of one of your most delectable secret desserts that I can boast to all that can hear, will surely please any palate in the house...yum, yum, yum etc...

More to come on the above request. Hope to see you all at the general meeting on this Thursday, March 8th.

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February's Speaker – Gretchen Krutz

By Jim Pisani

Gretchen Krutz, fashion jewelry designer, was the February speaker. Gretchen, who has a studio in Long Beach, CA, discussed her designer career, starting as a "ghost" designer for major jewelry



Gretchen Krutz

brands before going off on her own. Gretchen first draws her designs, and then cuts them into wax, and then cast.

Gretchen has won the coveted Diamonds Today Awards twice with designs. Gretchen had a relaxed presentation where she discussed the various pieces of art she had made and for whom. Lots of NBA players wear her designs, including Kobe Bryant! Thank you Gretchen for speaking at the AOS!



Here is one of Gretchen's Creations, composed of druzy, tourmaline, and of course, opal.

Stoddard Wells Tailgate

On March 9, 10 & 11, the Victor Valley Gem & Mineral Club will be having their 36th Annual Tailgate Event at Stoddard Wells outside of Victorville, CA.

This event is very popular with AOS members and a number of us usually take the 1½ hour drive from the Southern California area to the tailgate, which is situated out in the middle of a beautiful part of the Mojave Desert, surrounded by desert peaks. It is great place to find good rough and other lapidary products for a great price.

The tailgate is open from 9:00am - 5:00pm daily and is a free Event. All Vendor spaces are free on a first come basis. Findings, Books, Jewelry, Slabs, Cabs, Equipment and literally tons of Rough Material will be available.

There is a Saturday family Field Trip from 9am-1pm for the famous marble varieties located near the tailgate.

Food, Snacks & Drinks and restrooms will be available.

Directions: From I-15 Northbound towards Barstow:

Take the I-15 North through Victorville. Exit right at the second Stoddard Wells Rd at Bell Mountain EXIT #157. Turn Left/East at Ramp STOP Sign. STAY On Stoddard Wells Road 4 mi. until next STOP sign at Dale Evans Pkwy. "Tailgate" signs high on NW corner power pole.. Check Odometer here! Continue Straight on Stoddard Wells Rd. 7 miles to "Tailgate". Road becomes a graded dirt road about 4/10 mi. from the Dale Evans Pkwy intersection. Proceed East/NE past "Grange" fork to "Tailgate" site. Cars & RVs can make it w/ease & care. "Tailgate" signs along route.

Rain or Shine the tailgate will go on. Sponsored by the Victor Valley Gem & Mineral Club. Call (760) 243-2330 for more info OR check online at www.vvgmc.org

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AOS Calendar for 2012

By Jim Pisani

Below is the tentative AOS Calendar for 2012. We are still looking for interesting speakers, so any suggestion from members would be appreciated.

Date	General Meeting Topic / Speaker
12-Jan-12	Fred & Charlotte Ward on Opals
09-Feb-12	Gretchen Krutz on Jewelry Design and Wax Carving.
08-Mar-12	Jim Pisani on the World of Jade, with an emphasis on California Jade
12-Apr-12	Mike Woodard Photography – Gem micro-photography
10-May-12	Pete Goetz on Cooking Andamooka Matrix
14-Jun-12	Live Opal Auction
12-Jul-12	Opal Cutting Seminar
09-Aug-12	To Be Announced
13-Sep-12	To Be Announced
11-Oct-12	Opal & Gem Show Work Session
03-Nov-12	45th Annual Opal & Gem Show
04-Nov-12	45th Annual Opal & Gem Show
08-Nov-12	Opal & Gem Show Recap
13-Dec-12	AOS Christmas Party Potluck

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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: "matrixopal".

Opal Society Opportunity

The Anaheim Arts Council fund raiser, Champion of the Arts, is an election with a twist. You get to **vote early and vote often**. Wow! For a dollar a ballot we can stuff the ballot box and win the election!!

Arts Council member organizations such as AOS are participating by nominating their club's Champion of the Arts. Ballots are cast for our candidate and the club with the most votes wins!

Make cash and donation checks (tax deductible) payable to Anaheim Arts Council. Russ Madsen will collect your donations at our general meetings or contact Russ for a mailing address to send in donations. Russ will deliver donations and provide ballot stubs to you: Russ Madsen 562-884-2254 (chairman2rgm@verizon.net).

But wait there's more! There will be a prize drawing from all the ballots on May 3rd so each dollar contributed includes a chance to win great prizes.

And even more!! 50% of all funds donated to the Arts Council fund raiser will be rebated back to the member organization so each of your "votes" counts THREE TIMES.

This fund raising event ends April 30th. Remember, **VOTE EARLY - VOTE OFTEN**.

Once more, how do you participate? See Russ Madsen at the AOS general meetings or contact Russ at the above phone/email. Thanks for your support!

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March Lecture: Jim Pisani on Jade



Jim Pisani

Your humble Editor, will give a presentation on The World of Jade, with an emphasis on California Jade for this March's General Meeting.

Jim's presentation will discuss the following:

- What is Jade?
- Nephrite: its properties and locations
- Jadeite: its properties and locations
- Local Jade Field Trips in California
- Identifying Jade and Jade fakes
- Jim will have on hand specimens of the types of jade – real and fake

Jim Pisani is a member and an officer of the American Opal Society. For the past eleven years, he has edited the monthly newsletter, the Opal Express; he also has created and manages the website for the society at <http://opalsociety.org>.

Jim originally became interested in gems years ago while on a scuba diving vacation on the Great Barrier Reef in Australia. Having some extra time, he traveled to the Outback in South Australia and discovered opals in the opal mining town of Andamooka. Catching the opal bug, he looked for closer-to-home opal sites and discovered

places like Virgin Valley, where he has dug for the last twenty-two years.

Jim loves to go rockhounding all over the West. He digs for tourmaline in San Diego County and opal at Opal Canyon. Jim attempts to combine family vacations and rockhounding, convincing his wife and twelve-year old son to go looking for opal at Virgin Valley, Nevada on the way to Crater Lake, Oregon, or digging for opal at Tecopa, California, on the way to Death Valley, or collecting jade at Jade Cove while visiting Big Sur. He uses these experiences to write articles for the Opal Express newsletter or magazines like Rock & Gem.

Jim cuts opal and other stones when he can. He is also an avid fluorescent mineral enthusiast with a growing collection and constructs his own ultraviolet prospecting lights. He also likes to metal detect on the beaches of his home town, Huntington Beach, or the mountains in the Mojave for gold nuggets. In his limited spare time, Jim is an aerospace engineer, working with software.

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Famous Opals

Burning of Troy Opal

From The World of Opals, by Allan W. Eckert

Undoubtedly one of the most famous black opals in history, the "Burning of Troy" gained its name because of the many red flames blazing brightly in its black depths. This stone once stirred great interest in the French court, since Napoleon Bonaparte, at the height of his power, bought it as a gift for the Empress Josephine and she wore it with great frequency. At the time it was unquestionably the largest, most beautiful and most valuable opal in the world, weighing in its cut from about 700 carats [4.94 oz] and measuring 4" x 2.5" x 1" [101.6 mm x 63.5 mm x 25.4 mm]. Although most accounts allege this stone was mined in Slovakia, some experts have questioned that, saying it appears to be more typical of the Honduras opals because of its great size and that fact that it was a naturally black-backed black opal.

In 1814, five years after her divorce from Napoleon, Josephine died and the Burning of Troy opal, if she still had it at that time, disappeared. It seemed then to be lost forever, and yet, a hundred years later, this same stone abruptly appeared in Austria, having been acquired by the city of Vienna, though by what means remains secret. Officials of the city government valued it so highly that even when the Austrian capital city was experiencing severe financial distress immediately following World War I, the refused an offered of £25,000 for it. The Burning of Troy disappeared again at the outbreak of World War II and has not since resurfaced.

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Ownership of Meteorites

Meteorites are scarce, very few are found. But once a meteorite is found, the question of ownership comes up. If the object is recovered on land belonging to an individual, ownership belongs to the holder of the deed to the land, and not the finder. In the case of the great Williamette meteorite litigation over the ownership was finally settled by the Oregon State Supreme Court who rendered their decision in these words: (Lange 1962) "Meteorites embedded in the earth are real estate and consequently belong to the owner of the land in which they are found."

On the other hand if a meteorite is found on land owned or controlled by the United States government, under the Act of Congress, June 8, 1906, it may not be removed unless allowed by the US government through the Smithsonian Institution, whose permission must be obtained before a meteorite may be moved if lying on federally controlled land (Linsley 1939). Reference: Mineral Information Service, July 1966, "The Meteorites of California" C.P. Butler.

From <http://www.sfgms.org/theochron.html#carat>

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Abalone Mabe Pearl

Gem Profile

January 12th, 2011

Innovation makes recall of the time before it a nearly impossible feat. Try to remember pre-fax and pre-cell phone living. Similarly, jeweler Bob Fisher has a difficult time recalling his professional life before revolutionary changes in April 2001. That's when he became the first jeweler in the U.S. to stock cultured abalone pearls from New Zealand.



New Zealand Blue Abalone Mabe Pearl

That's also when he became living proof that in a Wal-Mart world big things can still happen to very small businesses. For the past 20 years, Fisher has run a tiny 700-square-foot store in Hendersonville, North Carolina, all by his skillful lonesome.

Without intending to do so, Fisher launched the American market for farm-raised abalone pearls. "I never dreamed I'd be getting e-mail inquiries from as far away as California and Arizona," he says.

If you lived in the continental U.S. or Canada and you somehow found out about these newcomers and went to the web site of their sole producer, Eyris Blue Pearls, you were sent to Fisher. This is why 60 percent of his abalone pearl sales are made over the Internet. Many other customers are web walk-ins who decide to drive to the southern end of North Carolina for live rather than screen viewings of the pearls.

"From the moment I put them out, I knew I had something that set me apart from every store in my state, if not the nation," Fisher says proudly. And with prices for most of his custom-design abalone earrings and pendants between \$600 and \$1,200, he knew he had an exclusive that combined his customer's intense desire for rarity and beauty with their pronounced need for budget pricing. "I had the best of both worlds: an affordable gem that looked like it cost a bundle."

That Fisher remained king of the abalone pearl market for nearly five years is almost as great a marvel as the still little-known South Sea marvels that he sells. Now he will have to share his once-exclusive domain with other jewelers. Eyris Pearls, the abalone pearl producer headquartered at Whangamoe Inlet, on New Zealand's Chatham Islands, recently named Imperial-Deltah, East Providence, Rhode Island, its sole U.S. distributor. Company head Peter Bazar intends to make Eyris Blue Pearls a thriving pearl brand. Already Bazar has invited noted designers to create pieces for an abalone pearl line.

Pleasure Domes

There's something I neglected to tell you about New Zealand cultured abalone pearls. They're mabes, a pearl grown affixed to the inside of a shell and not completely enclosed in nacre. Because they usually form as nacre domes, they were victimized with the name of half-pearls. Unfortunately, such bad-taste semantics conjures up an image of a pearl that is incomplete.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. A mabe pearl is a wholly complete cultured pearl. However, because it grows attached to the inside of a shell, its base cannot be covered with nacre. So, instead, it must be cut away from the shell and sealed with mother-of-pearl. But the rest of the pearl is encased in nacre.

No doubt you have seen beautiful South Sea and Tahitian mabe pearls. These dome pearls look identical to full pearls in terms of color, luster, and surface. But, of course, they are usually much less expensive.

In the case of abalone mabes, there are no round, oval, pear, or baroque shaped counterparts. Not yet anyway. The Eyris Company has chosen not to attempt to grow conventional pearls because the abalone mussel does not lend itself to the kind of nucleation that would lend itself to production of self-contained, entirely nacre-enclosed pearls. It is much more efficient and effective to grow mabes.

Nevertheless, growing mabes in abalone takes tender loving care and flawless surgical precision. "Abalone," says Eyris' founder Roger Beattie, "are hemophiliacs that can bleed to death from a single nick."

Don't confuse abalone with the hardy oysters used for most pearl culturing. Abalone are sea snails with a large central muscular foot. The main reason to use them for pearl farming is the fact that they tend to create vibrant, lustrous nacre that takes on the spectacular color play for which their shells are famous. There is nothing comparable in appearance to an abalone pearl except very fine opal. No wonder Eyris is just the most successful of several farms who have attempted to grow abalone pearls in the last two decades. Although there are more than 100 varieties of abalone throughout the world, Beattie uses the paua variety native to New Zealand because it possesses the highest degree of iridescence of any abalone shell. As the creature swaddles the nucleus in nacre, it exhibits swirling multi-colors that remind one of an object that has been encased in an opalizing substance.

Most New Zealand mabes are either deep aqua blues or lively teal greens, usually with wisps of pink. But predominantly pink pearls are known to occur.

Understandably, Beattie is reluctant to disclose the secrets of pearl culturing he has developed since starting his venture in 1989. Eyris Pearls is a vertically-integrated company that grows its own paua shells and nucleates them using proprietary techniques. Beattie now has five farms and usually harvests at each after three years growing time. Asked why he named his company Eyris, he answers, "I saw a connection between the iris of the human eye with its layers that act as light absorbers and reflectors and the colorful layers of the abalone pearl which give it its unique light reflecting qualities."

From <http://www.modernjeweler.com>

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Facts about Gold...

Researched and presented by Tom Taffel, member SFGMS

Golden Facts

Atomic Symbol: AU
Atomic Number: 79
Atomic Weight: 196.967
Specific Gravity: 19.300
Melting Point 1,945 degrees F
Boiling Point: 5,371 degrees F
MOH's Scale of Hardness: 2.5

Gold was formed with the earth's crust, generally in quartz veins, millions of years ago. It makes up just .001 parts/million (ppm) of the earth's crust. In the sea it is approximately .004 ppm. Iron meteorites have been found to contain gold in concentrations as high as 0.7 ppm.

Gold is very dense. 1.5 times more dense than lead, 19.3 times more dense than water.

Gold is malleable. An ounce of gold can be hammered to a thin sheet of at least 100 square feet. In a thin leaf, gold transmits green light. An ounce of gold can be stretched into a thin wire more than 5 miles long. A thread drawn from one ton of gold would stretch to the moon and back.

Various industries use 1,750 tons of gold a year. Dentists use 3 tons a year. Gold is used in computers, weaponry, spacecraft and medicine in the treatment of chronic ulcers and surgery to patch damaged nerves, blood vessels and bones.

The electrical conductivity of gold is 71 times that of copper.

Purity of gold:

- 10 karat gold is 40% pure. Black Hills gold is alloyed with copper.
- 14 karat gold is 58% pure and 42% alloy, generally silver.
- 18 karat gold is 75% pure.
- 24 karat gold is 100% pure and is attainable only through processing and refining.
- Natural placer gold, 80-92% pure, is 21-23 karat

77% of all gold recovered is by lode mining and is crushed, processed and refined. 20% of all gold recovered is byproduct of other base metal mining and must be refined. Only 3% of the gold recovered is from natural placer deposits. Less than 1/10 of 1% of gold is found in nugget form. Of this, 10% is selected for jewelry. An average of 80 cubic yards of gravel must be sluiced to find one ounce of placer gold.

A one-ounce nugget is as rare a find as a 5 carat diamond. Like snowflakes, no two nuggets are alike.

Laboratory Pure Gold is 1.000 Fine. Commercially Fine Gold is .999 Fine. U.S. Gold Coins are .9166 Fine (22 karat).

Annual world production of gold approaches 50 million ounces. Of that,

- 30 million ounces comes from South Africa
- 5 million ounces comes from Russia
- 3.3 million ounces comes from Canada
- 1.8 million ounces comes from The United States
- 0.9 million ounces comes from Australia

Gold is 19 times heavier than water. Gold will fall quickly to that bottom of a water course and then tend to stay in that place. Where it falls and how far down stream it will travel is the deciding factor in where to look for gold.

Gold being heavier than any other material in the stream will be moving very reluctantly. In doing so, it will generally move in a straight line, following the path of least resistance. When gold does encounter resistance--like a large boulder, it will stop and of course fall to the bottom of the river, or get stuck in a crevice of the boulder as it is falling. The first place to look for gold is out in the middle of the river around boulders. However if that boulder is in fast part of the river, unless the gold piece was big, the gold may have been washed right over or around and on downstream. The ideal spot for a boulder area that would produce gold would be in part of the river where the water slows to almost a stop. A pool of water on either side of the boulder would be a good spot to start a search.

The largest gold nugget ever found in Alaska was discovered near Nome. It weighed 155 ounces, was 7" long, 4" wide and 2" thick. According to Alaska's Mineral Industry 1990, major operators produced 231,000 ounces of gold in 1990, down from 297,900 ounces in 1989. Gold was first discovered in Alaska on the Kenai Peninsula in 1848.

From <http://www.sfgms.org/articles/taffelgold.html>

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Continuing with Chapter 20 of the book

From Rags to Riches & Disasters

By Peter Greisl

Chapter 20 - The Raid

Monday morning and the Sun was up and so was Johnny. Chris prepared some sandwiches for Johnny last night and put them in the fridge for him. Chris was already up and prepared breakfast for both of us. Johnny knocked and Chris told him to come in, after a good morning and all the other courtesies, We sat down and enjoyed some scrambled eggs with a couple of Rissoles left over from last night dinner, the coffee was ready we ate and drunk and I said to Johnny, " I call in to Laszlo's at my Lunch break and see if he has some scales." He nodded and replied, "Well I am off to the Fortune Paddock," and he smiled and finished by saying I will see you this afternoon, I said "Yes and Good Luck of course I don't have to remind you to call me if something exciting is happening." He nodded and bid us a good day and out the door into the Ute and drove off.

I just took my time and to get ready and talked with Chris to find out how she felt about everything and reminded her when the water carrier comes to have our drums filled, as we used some additional water. I told her I will order the parts what I need for the Batteries light so we can enjoy electricity in the evenings.

Chris also reminded me to fill up the VW as it was very low on fuel. She did not make any adverse comments about the situation, actually she was also quit excited about the small material e are finding.

Well it was time for me to go, I kissed Beatrix and Chris good bye and got in the VW and headed for the Co-Op, as I got out of Dutton Village about halve way where you could see the town, I saw some huge masts sticking in the air about 5 or 6 of them. As I got closer there were several Big Tents like Marquees erected and a few Police Land rovers, and Ranger 4wheel drives. As I got closer there were barricades across the dirt roads and a couple Policemen there stopping me. I stopped and one of the Policemen came over to me and asks me if I would park my car next to the Tent he pointed at, "Sure I replied and continued by saying what's this all about?" He just replied very courteously, "It is just a personal check as long as you have any ID and just answer a few questions you will be on your way in a few minutes." I parked the car where he said and he was waiting for me to get out of the car and he showed me the way in to the Tent where a Folding Table was erected and one policeman sat behind and ask me to sit down on a folding chair which I did and he then ask for ID and my Car Registration number I gave him my Driver's License, and told him the number which he wrote down on some sort of a form, he then took the license and handed it to another Policeman who was sitting in front of another Folding table on which a lot of communications equipment was set up. I heard the Policeman speaking with someone on the Radio and heard him saying in phonetics my name, date of birth, address and license number.

After that there was a silence. In the meantime the Policeman opposite me asked me where I came from, my marital status, how long have I been here, what were my intentions here, etc. I answered everything exactly the way it happened that brought me here to Andamooka. In the meantime the other Policeman on the Radio was saying something which I could not understand. He got up and came over and handed the License to the Policeman and just said, "All clear." He went back to his table and the Policeman here handed me back my license and said, "Thank you for your co-operation, I am sorry for the delay, I wish you good luck."

I replied, "That's it?"

"Yes you can leave", he retorted.

I went outside in to my car and drove to the Co-Op. I still was on time and Doug McCallum was there and smiled at me, "You got pulled up also, they blocked every entry and exit road into town." I nodded yes I did."

We went inside and I said," Doug by the way what other stuff do we sell here other than Groceries?" Doug replied, "Just about everything for mining and whatever we don't have we place orders for our customers, as long as it fits on a truck we can get it." I said that's great I need a couple of things." He asked what is it? I told him about the rectifier from Tandy, and also I mentioned a scale for opal weighing. He told me that he got them in stock. Withal sort of cutting equipment supplies, Wheels, Diamond Blades, Belts etc. I told him I would like to see a scale and I like to buy it if not too expensive. He said I can have it for cost plus 10%. As we are not too busy, Doug picked up wooden box about 12 inches long and about 5 inches wide, put it on the counter and lifted up the lid and it had a brass pin fairly close to the top which had a V shape slot. He took then out a brass arm which had a wedge shaped part which sits in the V shape of the pin, a couple brass plates of about 4 inch in diameter were attached with three fine brass chains at each end of the arm. He put the wedge in the V slot of the pin and there it was, a fantastic well balanced scale in the box there were small compartments which housed the weights of different sizes, it could weigh from 0.5 gram to 10 gram in 0.25 increments, it also had ounce weight and they were from ¼ ounce to max 5 ounces. All in all a great scale and just what I wanted. I asked Doug how much and he said he had to look it up, as he had not sold one for quite some time. It will not be too expensive as this is stock which he bought quite some time ago, hence the dust on the box and it was not sitting in view of any customers.

You take it he continued; I work something out for you.

So the Scale problem overcome and I gave Doug the details of the rectifier I needed which he will have picked up from Port Augusta.

So all I have to do is now to get the Batteries from Laszlo and we are home sweet home with everything.

Well the time did not go fast enough for me, so I can get to the claim to see what is going on and do some real work. Eventually closing time came and Anne and I cleaned up the shop and I left again with my daily meat, being nicely wrapped up it will be ok till I got it home into the fridge.

I got to the claim changed my clothes and I was ready for action.

There was no physical activity at the top but I noticed a lot of new dirt. I shouted, "Johnny" down the shaft and I could hear his reply. I went down, there was still a lot of dirt which has to be moved but at this time I was too anxious to find out of what happened today. I worked myself towards Johnny, he said hello and I asked him of what's happening or happened. He told me he followed nice traces for about 2 feet in the wall where we left off the night before; he explained the traces lost colour and turned to potch but got thicker. So he blasted and took out about 3 feet to start the tunnel, he dropped the level and unfortunately there was only potch with a very faint hue of blue hardly noticeable.

"Well let's get the mess cleaned up." There were already full buckets, I said to Johnny, "you have a break and go up and pull the buckets I will fill them." I am glad Johnny managed to get the pipes down here which made the situation much easier to move the buckets to the shaft. We moved the buckets to the shaft and Johnny went to the top. After a short time I could hear the familiar purring noise of the winch motor.

Johnny sent down the cable and I put on the first bucket and tugged on the cable and the bucket starting to ascend, and as usual it took about buckets to clear out everything.

It looks like we are back to square one, clean tunnel and shaft but no traces.

Johnny said," we give it another blast and see what we can come up with."

I agreed and we started to prepare the charges and drilled the holes for them.

To sum up the situation here, we have a shaft, then we have an opening with a 4 foot diameter pillar full with traces, which we cannot

take out, due to a great risk of a collapse, from this opening we have three tunnels which all go of diagonally to each other, one tunnel we broke through to a shaft on another claim by Frank,

to which we have access now and I put in our pegs so we got this claim as well.

Then we have a tunnel which is filled in or at least full of dirt. If we wanted to continue in this direction we would have to clean it out first to see how far it has gone. We have a 8 foot tunnel which we started at a 90 degree angle in the middle of the tunnel where we broke through to the other shaft, this tunnel has produced the stuff we cleaned up last night. "We have one more option" Johnny said to me "without risking any cave in and that is we drive a tunnel where they started at the shaft where the Ladders are mounted, on the proviso we find traces of any kind, I cannot figure out why they stopped after a couple feet." "There is one good thing here; we have a great distinguishable opal level with the brown band which is very strong right around these workings." "So let's get cracking so we can get everything ready for you tomorrow." I said.

We placed the charges and went to the top, and counted the bangs, after three we were satisfied. It was getting dark already and we had to still clean out everything.

We went down and started shoveling, and it was my turn to go to the top and start pulling dirt. Johnny leveled the floor and he was pleased with the blast result, as he got another three feet of tunnel done with the level intact, I pulled the last bucket and it was pitch black all ready, fortunately it was a nice clear sky and the light from the moon made it possible for me to see where I dumped the dirt. I shouted down to Johnny, "Come on mate, it is time to go," He came up and said, "well we shall see what we got tomorrow." I told him that I got a scale from the Co-Op, and he in return told me that we need some Kerosene, Gasoline and Carbide, he will be ok tomorrow but for the following day we need this stuff.

We got home and Chris was in a terrible state, she was worried sick as the time was 9pm and we never have been that late. I kissed her and apologized and handed her the meat, which were three pieces of T-Bone steaks and little piece of Rump for Beatrix. I said, "any problem with cooking these tonight," "Yes, we have left over's from last night, which must be eaten, you can have the Steaks tomorrow night, if you bring some Opal," she smiled. That's blackmail I exclaimed and Johnny said, "We will fulfill Chris's wish tomorrow." I told Chris, that I have to spend some money tomorrow, I told her what we have to get and, and Chris added a few things to my list what she needs for the household. The time was now 10:30pm I said to Johnny are you up to it to fool around with the scales and weigh the stuff or you wait till tomorrow." He said "let's wait maybe we will be adding towards it tomorrow."

Tuesday was another glorious winters day, the weather is absolutely perfect a little chilly but not too bad. Johnny had left for the claim and I went to the co-op to perform my duty as a butcher. During the Lunch break I went to Johnny Lyons Store as we did not have any Carbide in stock. When I got there the Johnny Lyons Truck just arrived from Port Augusta and they were unloading it. I met the driver which I did see at Gus's place some time ago, and he introduced himself and he was called Blue, I can understand the reason for his name as he had red hair and his face and arms were full of freckles. He told me that he is here with his wife Mary Anne and his two children and they were living on top of the hill a couple claims away from where Anne the Shop girl I work with lives. He does not do any mining he is just driving the truck for Johnny Lyons. I said to him we shall catch up one day at Gus's and share a drink. He acknowledged this suggestion and we went about our tasks. I got the carbide and went back to the co-op; I did the shopping Chris was after, got 5 gallon of fuel and 2 liters of Kerosene.

I finished the day with a record taking in the shop, which pleased Doug very much.

He asks me what was the main product, Anne the shop girl said to him, "it was Peters Sausages; we sold every single pound of it we are sold out completely."

Doug replied that's terrific as he knew the profit margin was about 300%. I told him I have to put in an order for more casings and spices etc., Doug suggested that I double the order. I also told Doug we might have to stay back one day to make up an extra batch, he said you do what you need to do," it is your show he smiled." I replied yes," but you are the man who pays the bills." He retorted this is no problem." So I organized with Anne to stay back the day the casings etc., arrive.

4 O'clock came and I was ready for some mining action, I changed my clothes and went to the claim, when I got there I heard the winch motor, so I got out and just as I got to the top of the mullock heap, Johnny appeared from the shaft, and started winching up a bucket. I said "Hello how is it going?" He replied, "Great got a lot done today, I did a blast and cleared it out and then I did another blast, which gives as now just on 9 feet of level to drop just a couple more buckets and we are ready for action."

He continued by saying, "We have to get a tape measure and check the tunnels and measure on the top so we can ascertain how far we can go so we do not encroach on another claim and if we have to we move our pegs, also if we find traces going in the direction of the other shaft, we might have to move the winch to the other shaft and start cleaning out to see what we have there left to work with." I replied, "I am only concerned about a cave in,"

Johnny explained, "we got one thing in our favor which is this heavy band of gypsum we have above and is all around, that is normally a great support, but by the same token we cannot be crazy and careless, and must have at least 4 feet between tunnels. If they run parallel, But I prefer to run tunnels off at 90 degree, and after 6 feet you can then change direction again if you have to because of traces, which means you will have a support of 6 feet square I seen some pillars only 4 feet in diameter but I like to play it safe." I said to Johnny, "how do you know all this?" He replied, I did a geological course at the Adelaide Tafe, before I came to the fields, we learned about different stress factors of different mineral etc., also the guy I used to work with, he was a mining engineer.

He knew all about the different strata formation on the opal fields of Andamooka and Coober Pedy which he studied particular."

"Well that makes me feel much better knowing that I am not working with a Greenhorn." I replied.

I said, "Let's clean out and call it a day and tomorrow you should have enough work with dropping the level so you don't have to blast and dig a lot." He agreed by saying, "Actually I am tired to day, this up and down and filling the buckets etc. does take it out of you."

We cleaned everything out and pulled up the last couple buckets of dirt and we left. It was about 6pm and Chris was not expecting us to early, so I suggested we have a quick beer at Gus's place, Johnny was delighted with this Idea. So we stopped at Gus's and there were Klaus and Ludwig. We joined them and Klaus remembered Johnny and we had a drink, and Ludwig was asking how things are going, I told him and I also mentioned of what we are trying to do and Klaus said, "You listen to Johnny, he seems to know what he is talking about." Johnny mentioned about moving the winch and Ludwig said, "Well if you have to do this, just let's know and we give you a hand, it is much easier with four people then with two." I thanked them for it. I got another round of drinks and we changed the subject and spoke about migrating etc., Sport, Weather etc., which was refreshing and a change from the subject of mining.

We drove home after and Chris asked how did things go, I told her about the shop and how pleased Doug McCallum was, also that I have to work a day in the shop after hours to make a patch of Sausages. Then we told what happened at the mine and about Klaus and Ludwig.

I said to Chris, "Would you like to go down to Gus's Place for a Glass of wine, you have not been out of this place for quite a while." Chris replied "I would love to."

I asked, Johnny would you mind looking after Beatrix? And you can weigh the opal while we are gone." Johnny said, Done Deal, don't rush back and enjoy yourself."

Chris finished cooking the T-Bones. She served them with fried Potatoes, Peas and Gravy. After Dinner I had a quick shower and we left for Gus's place.

When we arrived there were a few people there, Blue was there and he was drunk, Laszlo and his wife were there, they all acknowledged us and we sat down, Lottie Gus's wife came over to take our order, I introduced Chris to her and she asked if Gus has spoken to me about Chris helping out when the Coober Pedy crowd arrives.

Chris said, "Yes Peter told me and I am happy to help out." Lottie said that's great a bit of my mind, I just like to warn you this Bill Petrohelos is a bit of a womanizer,

He likes to touch and squeeze etc., but there is no harm, he is a nice and very generous person, I thought I better warn you." Chris replied, I can handle situations like that," Lottie replied "He is a very big tipper; I would not be surprised if you don't finish off the week end with two to three hundred dollars in tips alone."

"When do you need me," Chris asked, Lottie said," there are six of them and they arrive this Friday with Bills Plane, so it would be Friday, Saturday and Sunday evening from 6pm till closing whatever time that will be." If you can be here at 5 pm so I show you the ropes etc. that would be great." Chris answered, "I will be here you can rely on this." Great Lottie said," Now what would you like," I have a beer I said and Chris ask for a Glass of Spritzer, white wine with Lemonade.

We had our drink and then we went home. On the way home Chris said to me," Amazing now I am to become a Bar Maid and Waitress," Well darling just shows your life moves in mysterious ways."

When we got home Johnny was sitting in the room and had a cup of coffee and asks how it was? Chris said, "You are looking at the Andamooka Opal Restaurant Barmaid and waitress." She smiled and told Johnny what it is all about. Brilliant he replied.

"Well here is the report from the Opal Repository," Johnny said, "We have 28 carats of doublet material and 14 carat of Triplet material, Now a Drum roll please we have a great total of 4 ounces of chips." I am very pleased and excited this is very salable opal we have." I was absolutely over the moon, maybe this is the way my destiny is written, to tease me for a while and then get showered with an abundance of wealthy bliss.

On that note I said to Johnny, "My good friend I think it is time for us to hit the deck, I wish I did not have to do this butcher business, as I like to be more involved, in the mining activity." Johnny replied, "Peter your job is as important as mine in working the claim, you got a family to consider and provide for, and at the moment there is not enough around for you to stop," I can go to work knowing that I have a roof over my head and food on the table, and that is what you are provide. So it is only natural for me to put in every effort to get us closer to fulfill your dream, and of course mine." Good Night my friends, I am of to bed he said smilingly, tomorrow is an important day. I feel it in my water."

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March 2012 Gem & Mineral Shows

More shows can be found at <http://www.rockngem.com/show-dates-display/?ShowState=ALL>

2-4—DEL MAR, CA: Wholesale and retail show; Gem Faire Inc.; Del Mar Fairgrounds; 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$7, children (11 and under) free; jewelry, gems, beads, crystals, silver, rocks, minerals, exhibitors from all over the world; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

2-4—NEWARK, CA: Annual show; Mineral & Gem Society of Castro Valley; Newark Pavilion; 6430 Thornton Ave.; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$6 (3-day pass), children (under 12) - free with adult; fluorescent rock display and sale, live demonstrations, supplies, auction, door prizes, kids' Spinning Wheel; contact Cathy Miller, PO Box 2145, Castro Valley, CA 94546, (510) 887-9007; e-mail: info@mgscv.org; Web site: www.mgscv.org

3-4—ARCADIA, CA: Annual show; Monrovia Rockhounds; County Arboretum and Botanic Garden; Ayres Hall, 301 S. Baldwin Ave.; Sat. 9-4:30, Sun. 9-4:30; free admission; more than 15 vendors; contact Jo Anna Ritchey, 224

Oaks Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016, (626) 389-624; e-mail: joannaritchey@gmail.com; Web site: www.moroks.com
8-11—VICTORVILLE, CA: 35th annual tailgate; Victorville Gem & Mineral Club; Stoddard Wells ; Stoddard Wells Rd., 7 miles east of I-15; Thu. 8-dusk, Fri. 8-dusk, Sat. 8-dusk, Sun. 9-4; free admission; more than 60 dealers, crystals, rocks, minerals, fossils, gems, silent auctions; contact Brett Ward, 15056 - B, 7th St., Victorville, CA 92395, (760) 243-2330; e-mail: info@vvgmc.org; Web site: www.vvgnc.org
9-11—PLEASANTON, CA: Wholesale and retail show; Gem Faire Inc.; Alameda County Fairgrounds; 4501 Pleasanton Ave.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$7, children (11 and under) free; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com
10-11—SPRECKELS, CA: Annual show; Salinas Valley Rock & Gem Club; Vet's Memorial Hall; 5th St. and Llano St.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission, display cases, demonstrators; contact Karin Salomon, (831) 375-5233; e-mail: kcbakes27@yahoo.com; Web site: salinasrockandgem.com
10-11—TURLOCK, CA: 46th annual show; Mother Lode Mineral Society; Stanislaus County Fairgrounds; 900 N. Broadway; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$5, children (12 and under) free with adult; 40 dealers, 80 exhibits, 20 demonstrators, kids' activities, Tethy's Ocean Project fossil display and Plesiosaurus skeleton; contact Bud or Terry McMillin, (209) 524-3494; Web site: www.turlockgemshow.com
16-18—BAKERSFIELD, CA: 11th annual show; Lynne and Lew Helfrich; Kern County Shriners Park; 700 South P St.; Fri. 9-5, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-5; free admission,, Mount Ida quartz crystals; contact Lynne Helfrich, 3006 N. Baker St., Bakersfield, CA 93305, (661) 323-2663; e-mail: lewrocks@bak.rr.com
17-18—VALLEJO, CA: Annual show, "Spring Bling"; Vallejo Gem & Mineral Society; Solano County Fairgrounds, Mc Cormack Hall; 900 Fairgrounds Dr.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$5, children (12 and under) free with adult; contact Dan Wolke, 900 Fairgrounds Dr., Vallejo, CA 94510, (707) 745-1816; e-mail: dncwolke@sbcglobal.net; Web site: vallejogemandmineral@gmail.com
24-25—ANGELS CAMP, CA: Show and sale; Calaveras Gem & Mineral Society; Calaveras County Fairground; 101 Frogtown Rd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; adults \$4, children (12 and under) free with adult; contact Tak Iwata, 18310 Coyote Meadow Rd., Sonora, CA 95370, (209) 928-5579; e-mail: tak2me@msn.com; Web site: www.calaverasgemandmineral.org
24-25—ROSEVILLE, CA: 50th annual show, "Roseville Gem, Jewelry, Fossil & Mineral Show"; Roseville Rock Rollers; Roseville (Placer County) Fairgrounds; 800 All America City Blvd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; adults \$6, seniors (60+) \$5, children (12 and under) free contact Gloria Marie, (916) 216-1114; e-mail: gloriarosevillerockrollers@gmail.com; Web site: www.rockrollers.com
31-1—LEMOORE, CA: Annual show; Lemoore Gem & Mineral Club; Trinity Hall; 470 Champion St.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-6; free admission; featuring California jade; contact John Pereira, 335 W. D St., Lemoore, CA 93245, (559) 924-4052
31-1—TORRANCE, CA: 63rd annual show, "Nature's Treasures"; South Bay Lapidary & Mineral Society; Ken Miller Recreational Center; 3341 Torrance Blvd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; free admission; exhibits, demonstrations, children's activities, prize drawings, door prizes, fluorescent mineral exhibit, slabs, rough rock, used equipment; contact Leslie Neff or Larry Hoskinson, 938 14th St., Hermosa Beach, CA 90254, (310) 318-2170; e-mail: lesneff@aol.com; Web site: www.palosverdes.com/sblap

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IMG_002 \$315 Lightning Ridge Mixed, some very bright pieces 3.05oz

IMG_003 \$45 per kilo Lightning Ridge Black & Dark Base Potch 1 kilo

IMG_004 \$75 Lambina dark base 1.65oz



IMG_005 \$375 IMG_3354 Lambina small stones 1oz

IMG_006 \$201.10 Lambina Reds \$1275.00/oz .158oz

IMG_007 \$262.50 Lightning Ridge faced Nobby 23mm x 12mm 12.65 grams

IMG_008 \$300 17 Mile Semi Black \$600/oz .504oz



IMG_009 \$75 Andamooka Blue Green Jelly 30mm x 20mm x 10mm thick 8.3 gr.

IMG_010 \$ 717 Zorba \$900 per oz .797oz

IMG_011 \$180 Lambina small Blue stones \$180 per oz, 1oz

IMG_012 \$2,175.00 Lambina Black gem, gem, gem \$3,750 per oz .581oz

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Tuesday-Saturday 10am-3pm. Appointments Also Available

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:
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 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 and complete the form. You March 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.

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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.

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Are Your Dues Due Now?
 PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL or NEWSLETTER E-MAIL. There should be a date that shows the current month/year of your membership. If the date is older than the current date, your dues are overdue. A warning will be stated if you are overdue. A Renewal Grace Period of two months will be provided. 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

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**Volume #45 Issue #3
March 2012**

TO:

Some Topics In This Issue:

- Opal Society Opportunity
- Burning of Troy Opal
- Ownership of Meteorites
- From Rags to Riches & Disasters
- Ch. 20 - The Raid
- Abalone Mabe Pearl
- Ownership of Meteorites
- Facts about Gold

Important Dates:

March 4 - Board Meeting

March 8 - General Meeting:

**Jim Pisani on the World of Jade
with an emphasis on California
Jade**

— GENERAL MEETINGS —

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

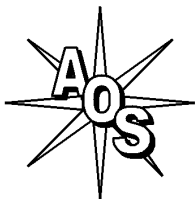
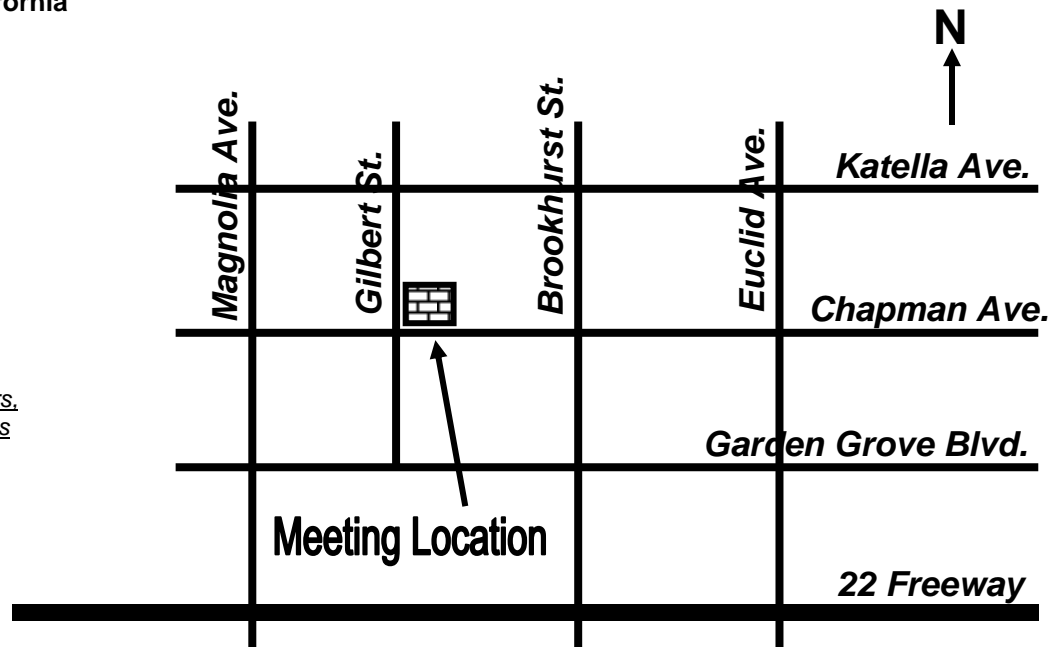
Garden Grove Civic Women's Club
9501 Chapman Ave.
Garden Grove, CA 92841
(NE corner of Gilbert & Chapman)

MEETING ACTIVITIES

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

March 8th Speaker

Jim Pisani on JADE



The American Opal Society

<http://OpalSociety.org>

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