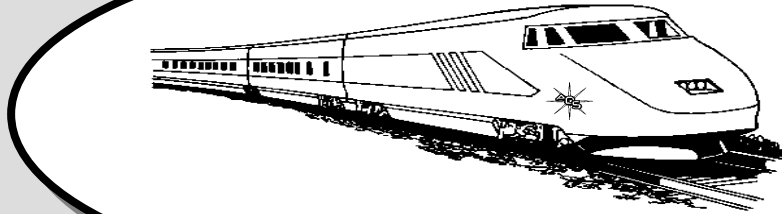


The Opal Express

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Opal Society



March 2013

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President's Message

By Pete Goetz

Fellow Opalholics,

We are making progress on our new venue. We now have a signed contract with the Phoenix Club, and will have the Vendor contracts finalized this week. We still need a Treasurer, my skills as a book keeper our not the best, So, we could use some help.

When I think of March, I think Field Trips. If any of our membership has a field trip idea they would like to pursue, let us know and we can arrange to make it happen. Along the same line, if you know of any persons who have presentation related to our society's interest, again, feel free to let us know.

I have recently received several requests to use the shop at Ball Jr. High School. As a reminder, I no longer have access to the school. We have not, as yet, been able to find a place that meets our equipment requirements and pocket book. we hope start-up again in the future.

March Speaker: Michael Greyslock on Gold Detecting

Michael Greyslock will be our speaker for March on gold detecting. Mike has been an avid and successful nugget hunter for years. He spends his summers detecting in the California Mother Lode country and his winters in the southwest deserts continually studying the natural world. Michael writes articles on gold hunting and is frequently published in ICMJ's Prospecting and Mining Journal.

Members Only Website Password

AOS website's members only area: Name: "member" and Password: "opalyear".

Anaheim Arts Council Election Annual Fund Raiser

Hey all, the annual Anaheim Arts Council fund raiser Champion of the Arts is under way. We need everyone to pitch in with a tax deductible donation. Each dollar "buys" one vote. Yes you can BUY this election - if you wanted something you didn't get in November or you just know the outcome you want is the most valuable, here's your chance to make your dream come true!

!!! VOTE EARLY - VOTE OFTEN !!! See Russ Madsen or any board member at each of the next three general meetings to sponsor your ballots. You will provide your contact information because there is also a prize drawing from all tickets submitted. You may be an individual winner. Also, proceeds are split 50/50; one half of each organization's sales are granted back to the organization so you will also be helping the AOS.

!!! THIS IS A WIN - WIN ELECTION !!!

Council meeting (April 3 Soirée) at the Anaheim White House. All ballots from AAC member organizations will be counted during January March and March and the 2013 Arts Council Champion of the Arts will be announced at the Arts

AOS Calendar for 2013

By Jim Pisani

Below is the tentative AOS Calendar for 2013. We need to fill most of the calendar with interesting speakers, so any suggestion from members would be appreciated.

American Opal Society Calendar	
Date	General Meeting Topic / Speaker
10-Jan-13	Opals of The Americas, Part 2 – Jim Pisani
14-Feb-13	Fluorescent Minerals and Opals - Jim Pisani
14-Mar-13	Michael Greyslock on Gold Detecting
11-Apr-13	Jason Zzyzx on Agates of Southern California
09-May-13	To be announced
13-Jun-13	Live Opal Auction
11-Jul-13	Opal Cutting Seminar
08-Aug-13	Member Show & Tell
12-Sep-13	To be announced
10-Oct-13	Opal & Gem Show Work Session
03-Nov-13	46th Annual Opal & Gem Show
04-Nov-13	46th Annual Opal & Gem Show
14-Nov-13	Opal & Gem Show Recap
12-Dec-13	AOS Christmas Party Potluck

How to Kill Your Club in 13 Easy Steps

1. Stay away from meetings.
2. If you do come, find fault.
3. Decline office or appointment to a committee.
4. Get sore if you are not nominated, appointed or when you feel "snubbed" by another member.
5. After you are named to a committee, don't attend meetings.
6. If you do get to a meeting, clam up until it's over, THEN tell them how things should really be done.
7. Don't do any work if you can help it, and when the "old reliables" pitch in, accuse them of being in a clique.
8. Oppose all meetings and seminars as being a waste of time and members' money.
9. When there's a lot of business to discuss at the meetings - take up meeting time by complaining.
10. Never accept a place at the head of the table. You might learn something new.
11. If you aren't asked to sit there, get angry and threaten to resign because you are not appreciated.
12. Don't pay your dues on time, let the executives sweat. After all, they wrote the budget and write the checks.
13. Read your mail only now and then. Put the club bulletin aside, there isn't anything in it anyway.

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And How to Resurrect an Ailing Club

1. Decide to take part in all you can. You've always planned to do more, do it now while there's someone left to do it with.
2. Offer to share your skills and expertise by putting on a "hands on" program or "Rock-Of-The-Month" show-and-tell.
3. Consider your contribution in absolute terms. What will you gain and what can you give. (Ignore comparisons to the contributions of others - their situations, money, health and interests will be different).
4. Lead by example. It's much more effective than describing a course of action you can't yourself follow.
5. Offer to do a program at a local school and invite kids to come to your meeting or workshop.
6. Remember, criticism of others invites criticism of one's self. Only the "noblest Romans" can bear such scrutiny.
7. If you can't say something nice, shut up and let others talk. Kind words and good deeds can go anyplace, gossip easily finds its way home.

Let's all work together to help make ours a fantastic Gem & Mineral Club!

From American Federation of Mineralogical Societies Sep 2000

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Bernhardt Holtermann and the Gold Nugget

Bernhardt Otto Holtermann (29 April 1838, Hamburg, Germany - 29 April 1885, Sydney, Australia) was a successful gold miner, businessman, and politician in Australia. Perhaps his greatest claim to fame is his association with the Holtermann Nugget, the largest specimen of gold ever found, 1.5 meters (59 inches) long, weighing 286 kg (630 pounds), in Hill End, near Bathurst and with an estimated gold content of 5000 ounces (57 kg). A larger find was made by the same men, but was broken up before being brought to the surface.

Holtermann emigrated in 1858 to avoid Prussian military service. He departed Liverpool aboard the ship Salem and reached Melbourne in August after a journey lasting 101 days. After working at a variety of jobs, he teamed up with Polish miner Ludwig Hugo Louis Beyers. They began prospecting around Hill End, New South Wales. Years of unrewarding labour followed. On 22 February 1868, Holtermann married Harriett Emmett, while Beyers married her sister Mary.

Finally, things began looking up in 1871. The Star of Hope Gold Mining Company, in which he and Beyers were among the partners, struck rich veins of gold. Then, on 19 October 1872, the Holtermann



Holtermann and the Gold "nugget"

Nugget was discovered. It was not strictly speaking a nugget, but rather a specimen or matrix (a vein of gold embedded in rock, in this case quartz), nor was Holtermann the sole finder, but the name stuck. Holtermann attempted to buy the nugget from the company, offering £1000 over its estimated value (£10,000, according to one source) but was turned down, and the nugget was sent away to have the gold extracted. Disheartened, he resigned from the company in February 1873.

He built a magnificent mansion in St Leonards, a suburb of Sydney, complete with a stained glass window depicting himself and the nugget. He invested wisely and kept his wealth, allowing him to take up his true passion, photography.

Holtermann financed and possibly participated in Beaufoy Merlin's project to photograph New South Wales and exhibit the results abroad to encourage immigration. The work was taken up after Merlin's death in 1873 by his assistant, Charles Bayliss. In 1875, Holtermann and Bayliss produced the Holtermann panorama, a series of "23 albumen silver photographs which join together to form a continuous 978-centimetre view of Sydney Harbour and its suburbs." Some of the photographs, including the panorama, were displayed at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, where they won a bronze medal. The panorama was also displayed at the 1877 Exposition Universelle Internationale in Paris.

Holtermann was also interested in patent medicine. He was proud of having cured fellow passengers on his 1858 sea voyage to Australia. After he retired from mining, he wrote papers and devised formulae for medicines, and promoted and sold "Holtermann's Life Preserving Drops".

In 1882, on his third try, Holtermann was elected to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly for St Leonards. He died on his birthday, 29 April 1885, of "cancer of the stomach, cirrhosis of the liver and dropsy", leaving a wife, three son, and two daughters. *From Wikipedia.org*

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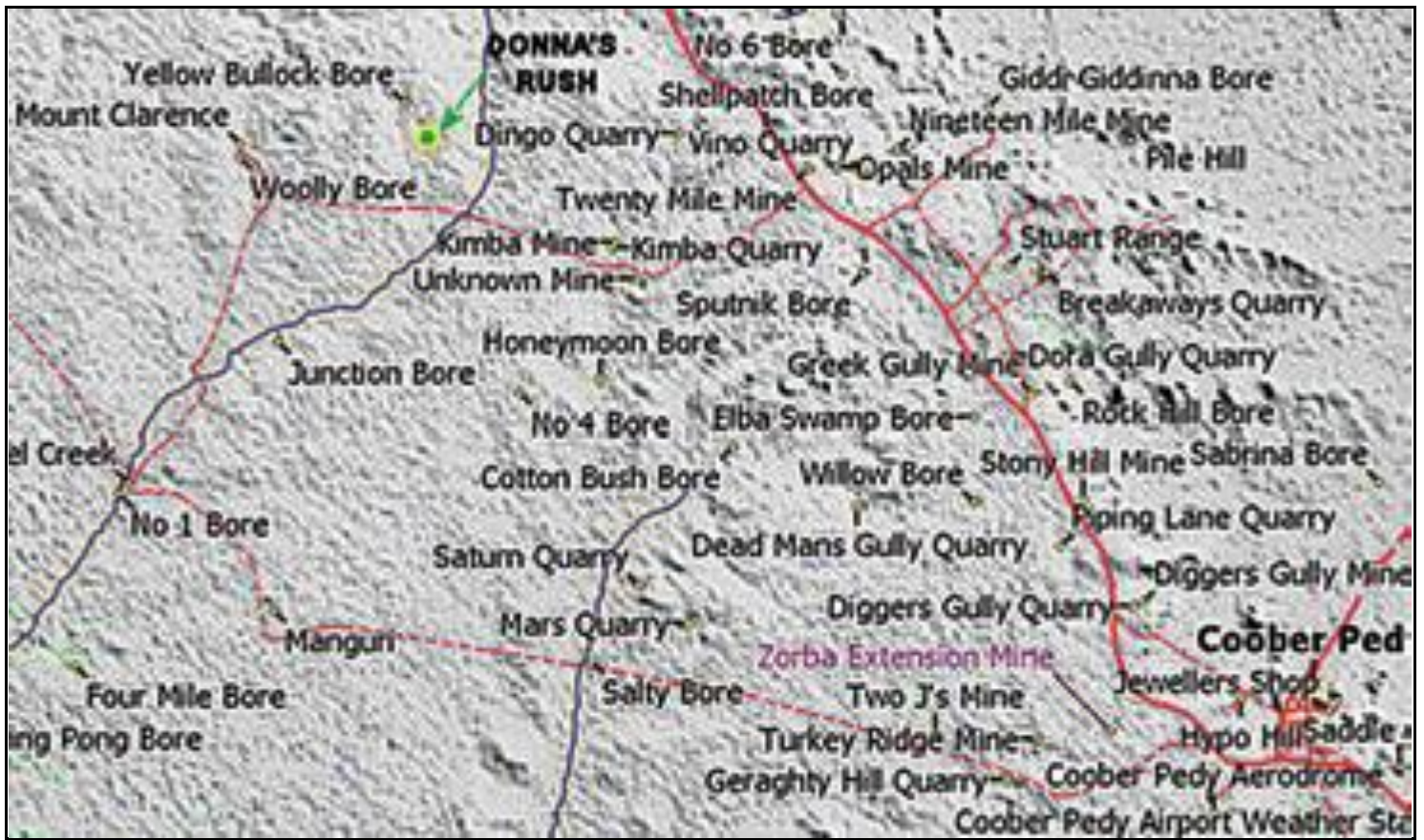


Donna's Rush signage. The field is exciting news to Coober Pedy and the opal industry

Opal Discovery Sparks Industry Excitement

Aug. 4, 2011

By Steve Staines for Coober Pedy Regional Times



Mud Map of Donna's Rush Location

The 7th July 2011 marked the beginning of the first opal rush in Coober Pedy since Opal Ridge back in 2007.

An unknown area has been named in honor of John and Yoka Dunstan's daughter, Donna Dunstan who tragically passed away two years ago.



Paul Reynolds, opal miner of 25 years - "we've got used to the good times... and the bad"

The story of the discovery of Donna's Rush will bring a smile to many an opal miner, both past and present, as it echoes whispers of many an opal story....

"John (Dunstan), and I had found a bit of opal in Greek Gully 12 months ago," explains Paul Reynolds. "That kept us going for over 12 months". "In mid-May we decided to hit it hard and have a good run through the cooler months.

John and Paul started drilling



John Dunstan, opal miner - "It dropped out of the bucket and our jaws dropped with it"

Caldwell shafts at 23 Mile with no luck. They moved on to Kimba Field and the opal drought continued.

"By the time we'd finished at Kimba we'd drilled around 90 shafts... not a sniff of colour," said Paul.

"We were pretty disheartened but, between John and me we have around 70 years in opal mining so we've got used to the good times... and the bad."

The Opal Express

In early July John and Paul decided to have a crack at an area that John had had his eye on for many years.

"I found red/grey floaters around there in 1968," John said. "They weren't cracked or crazed which made me think there is likely some good opal in the area."

"In all honesty, by the time we got to Donna's Rush we were on the bones of our ass!" said Paul. "The bank was starting to own me again but, hopefully, not for much longer!"

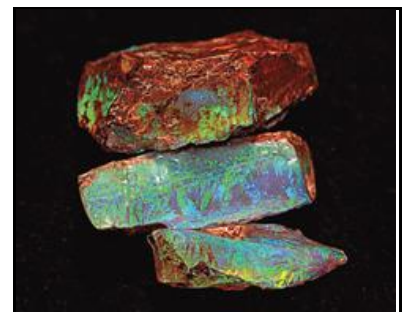
John and Paul started drilling in early July. There was a smattering of shallow drill holes and some meager dozer excavations but nothing of any real substance. They put down around 30 shafts before they cut colour.

"I remember when we first cut colour," John says, "It dropped out of the bucket and our jaws dropped with it, we couldn't believe it! It was barry, blue, green, chunky material... a great indicator of more opal to come. That's when we starting chasing it along what looks to be a fault. We jumped 30 feet from the original shaft, 60 feet, and then 90 feet... the material kept coming up! I'm stuffed if I know what's there but it could be big!" said John.

"We've now put 12 shafts over a 260 foot length along the slide and every one of them has cut good blue/green crystal," said Paul. "On the twelfth shaft we started bringing up the best opal so far and (of course) the drill broke. We had it repaired in a couple of days and straight back into it."

Paul and John now plan to excavate a cut. Once they dig down to the lower level they'll chase the opal along (what looks to be a) slide.

Based on current drilling, there appears to be two



"12 shafts drilled good blue/green crystal"

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Local opal miners on the job already. Over 50 registered claims and over 100 pegged at 'Donna's Rush'

levels. The first level at 32 feet (predominantly red/grey opal) and the second level at 46 feet (predominantly blue/green crystal).

The partnership managed to keep the discovery of the new field quiet for two weeks but now the cat is out of the bag.



with renewed enthusiasm local opal miners are pegging claims out at 'Donna's Rush'

"We are pegged in now but that's ok," John said. "We just hope that Donna's Rush will stimulate the industry a bit, it needs some good news."

There are now over 50 registered claims and over 100 pegged at Donna's Rush, the most at any one field since Opal Ridge back in 2007.

The location was listed on PIRSA maps as simply "Unknown". PIRSA has now officially renamed the area "Donna's Rush".



Currently there are 3 Caldwell drills, 3 investigator drills, 1 dozer, 2 Excavators and a dump truck working on 'Donna's Rush'

Currently (as of 28th July) at Donna's Rush there are 3 Caldwell drills, 3 investigator drills, 1 dozer, 2 excavators and a dump truck. It has only been 1 week since the opal find has become public so hopefully there is still plenty more dirt to be moved and plenty more opal to be found.

Allegedly the line at the Coober Pedy PIRSA office was 10 deep early last week with everyone renewing their PSPPs and pegging claims. So renew your PSPPs, peg a claim and...let the rush begin!
From <http://cooberpedyregionaltimes.wordpress.com>

From Rags to Riches

Chapter 32 – Gunshots

By Peter Greisl

This is the day I was waiting for; 4 O'clock cannot come quick enough to get my job over and done with so I can go to the claim, to put all the gear through its test. I am sure Johnny will have all the info and of course would be using the equipment by the time I get there.

Finally it is time to close up and I hit the road with my meat parcel in the Cooler box. As I arrived there I noticed the Ute was parked in an alcove of the mullock heap just as I was hoping it would go.

I then remembered I was calling on to Laszlo to settle up but in all the excitement I forgot.

No machinery was working and the cable for the lights was hooked up to the battery box and there was one air hose leading to and down the shaft just like the light cable. I went to the shaft and shouted down, "Anybody home," the echo came "Yes mate come down." I climbed down and there was light in the tunnels and it was as bright as day which was absolutely great. Johnny placed the lights so we have no dark area on the wall we will be working on and we could see where we pushing the buckets to the shaft for winching. I was stoked and pleased with my decision

and idea of the lights, but we have not got the compressor running so I don't know if everything is working as I hoped it will." Hey mate that's great," I commented to Johnny, to which he replied yes absolutely fantastic what a brilliant idea, I did not have to use the Jack hammer to loosen the dirt it was quite easy but a long job as you can see I just completed the light set up. "Actually in one way I am glad as I would like to be part of the maiden voyage if you want to call it that," I said. "Well I am ready so let's go and kick the beast in the guts and see if she lives up to Laszlo's promise." We climbed up and got on back of the Ute and Johnny told me that there is nothing to it all we have to do is open the fuel cock and pull a couple times the starter wheel to prime the motor and the flick the ignition switch and pull the cord hard and the motor should start straight away. "Everything is full and checked" Johnny said "let's do it."

Johnny opened the fuel cock, wrapped the starter cord around the flywheel, and pulled gentle, and repeated the same thing, he then flicked the ignition switch and he gave the rope a swift pull, and the compressor motor started immediately, the exhaust noise was very loud due to the fact that the three cylinders exhaust pipes went in to one singular pipe with no muffler. I gestured to Johnny to cut the power to turn it off. He came closer to me and said "before we shut it down let's check the pressure gauge to see what we getting," I nodded ok and checked the gauge which showed 240 PSI, he continued lets go down and try the Jack hammer and see if there are any leaks, before we went down the pressure relief valve started operating and let the excess pressure out. Everything up here looks great the battery charging gauge is registering a perfect 14 Volt.

We climbed down off the Ute and headed for the shaft to go down when we got down the noise was not as bad but if you up the top and work the winch you would be deaf in no time.

Johnny said, "Well it is your baby gives it a shot." I picked up the jack hammer which was not heavy at all and located the trigger and pointed it against the wall for the first gauge, As I pressed the

trigger the Jack hammer started to sink the chisel head in to the wall without any effort or strain, I broke the gauge and did another one and another one and the dirt seems to be just flying out of the wall in no time I gouged out about two feet across and three feet down, I stopped and handed it to Johnny who took it and he started to do the same as I was, and again the dirt seems to just crumble and fall down. He stopped and said, "Hell what a difference. " I totally agreed with him and said. Tomorrow take the whole lot down to Laszlo and ask him to weld an elbow to come out below the carriage and extend it and fit a muffler or resonator on to it and make it like a smoke stack on a truck but go not higher than 12 inches above the starter pulley and face the spout away from the unit and tell him I see him at just after I shut the shop to settle up with him." Johnny agreed he will do this and go back to the claim and work manual for a while. " Great my friend we might as well keep going to night since it is running." I said. Johnny acknowledged and told me to gouge and he will shovel and fill the buckets.

I did as suggested and kept gouging and was taking out the dirt as close to the level as possible and took it down all the way to floor. It was great now I can understand why some tunnels kneeling height and some standing height it was the kneeling height tunnels were made by manual gauging, and the standing height were done with machinery.

Anyhow I kept working the Jackhammer and gouging very well, there was the occasional sandstone, but most of it was clay I left about a couple inches on the level and just pushed the dirt back. Johnny moved the full buckets to the shaft, and told me he is going up and start the winch to haul the buckets, I followed him to hook up the buckets and he pulled them up and sent the empty ones back down, I shouted up for him to stay there I fill a few buckets and send them up, which I did.

He came down and I started gouging again, and we moved this evening a lot of dirt and opened up about seven to eight feet of tunnel.

When we were finished and everything looked nice clean under the circumstances, we reset the lights so it was shining directly on the level which we are going to take down now. I changed the broad chisel to a skinnier and narrow one and started inserting just above the level; Johnny had spread out on the floor our old blanket which Chris gave us, to drop the level on it. I kept gently pulling down small parts of the level and Johnny was standing behind me and was watching like a hawk. As I broke off a small piece Johnny yelled, "Hold it," I stopped and Johnny pointed in to an area which he could see better from where he was standing I moved across to be in the same angle as he is and I could see these great flashes of colour.

Johnny bent down and picked up the piece I broke off and there was the colour again, a thin seam of colour was running right across the piece he had in his hand, "Have you got the linen bag with you," he asked me. I nodded and pulled it out on my pocket. He went to the tool bucket and got his screw driver we sat down and started to dismantle this piece of level, which was riddled with colourful pieces of half of a mm up to about three mm in thickness, we scratched and licked and were smiling and urging each other on by saying "this is it, it must be here," we got quite a few nice pieces out of it and a good quantity chips. Johnny said "this is now a small pick and screw driver job," I replied, "Well, let me at it, I will find the bugger," and I started picking away, unfortunately not too much came from this spot but we got it all out and in the linen bag. I started to hit a bit harder to get bigger pieces of the level and after a few strikes there was suddenly this sound as if I was hitting in to a box of glass, Johnny just gasped a "Wow", and I added to it "Holy Shit" it happened, "we got it" Johnny handed me the screw driver and brought the light board closer and I started gently digging my hand was shacking with the adrenalin surging through my veins in anticipation of finding what we were looking for, and there it came out one piece after another some the size of matchboxes, and our jaws dropped as there was not a single spark of colour there, all just plain potch. We must have taken out at least 20 or 30 ounces of

potch. So we unearthed a pocket which could have been our pot at the end of the rainbow. Johnny put it with the rest of the level material to take home and inspect it carefully.

I started more gouging and dropping of the level, and after another few inches I came across the fine line of colour again, and back with the screw driver and breaking off gentle the brown matter where the trace were located, that went on for some time and then they disappeared again, it was like a cat and mouse game but the excitement has not dropped. I have only dropped about two feet of the Level and we have another 6 feet to go I worked it out that there is about 18 square feet of level to work still.

I said to Johnny, "Let's take the rubbish home and we look at it on the weekend, we should have quite bit of chips here and most likely two or three stones," Johnny said there could be something in the stuff we dropped on to the blanket."

"Ok, let's pack up, which will take us a while, I said." We got the gear together in a bucket, grabbed the two light boards, and Johnny was heading up the ladder with the board hanging around his neck. When he was up there he started the winch and we hauled the tool bucked up, and sent down an empty bucket where I put in the blanket with all the material, and sent it up. Before he shut down the compressor so we still had light we put everything on the Ute pulled up the air hose and wrapped up the lighting cable and put all on the Ute, I started up my car so he could see to switch off the compressor.

Everything was secured and we were ready to head for home. Upon arrival, Chris was outside and waiting for us, she greeted us with a very concerned look on her face; I asked "What's the matter," She told me "there were some serious arguments over at Marianne's and Blue's house, fighting an shouting, and children screaming door slamming, I am sure Blue hit Marianne as I heard her crying out in pain, then I heard Blue screaming "I kill you bitch one of these days, I give you f.....g money when I am good and ready." And he just drove off in an absolute dangerous way, spinning the wheels and swerving all over the place." "This guy has to be stopped,"

I replied. "Unfortunately there is not enough police control here so what can she do." Well let's hope she is OK.", Chris replied.

By the way Sweetheart what is the time, I asked, and Chris replied 8pm.

Well let's clean ourselves up and have dinner, "Johnny I think we leave the sorting out till the weekend, I suggest you put the stuff in the blanket with the buckets you take on Saturday to Klaus." "I was going to, but we will have a look what we got in the linen bag," Johnny said. I replied, "I would not miss it, I am still trembling from the excitement." "Looks like you boys had a bit of good luck," Chris commented. "Wait till you see the size of some stuff which is totally worthless." I gave Chris a complete rundown of the excitement at the claim to which she listened very attentively.

Johnny came back in from moving the stuff and went in the shower; I just cuddled Beatrix for a while and waited for my turn in the shower.

After my shower we had a nice meal and started to relax and feeling tired, I looked at Johnny and he was sitting sipping his coffee and starting to doze off.

I said "hey let's call it a day, we can wait till tomorrow with the stuff in the bag." Everyone agreed and we decided to hit the sack.

Johnny said good night and went to his room. Chris put Beatrix to bed and I started getting undressed as I heard a Car coming screaming past our place towards Marianne's place, I am sure it was Blue, then a car door slammed and the voice screamed, "Bitch where are you, I am going to kill you." It was Blue drunk as a skunk. After his scream there was a gunshot, and a couple seconds later another one. Then Marianne came screaming out shouting, "I just shot Blue", not much longer people appeared from all directions, we went across and there was Blue lying in front of the door with a bullet hole in his forehead. One of the Nurses from the Hospital came also and took Marianne inside the house and shut the door,

then a wagon came from the hospital and picked up Blue's body and took it to the Hospital. There were murmurs around from the spectators that he deserved whatever he got. We went back to our place and were absolutely dumbfounded.

We could not get much sleep this night.

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Owyhee Jasper

By Ron Gibbs



On the eastern side of Oregon there is a lake called Owyhee Lake, feed by a river with the same name. This area of Oregon is high desert country and contains an abundance of fine jaspers and agates. The various varieties of Owyhee Jasper share a geographic region not a single locale.

There are many different looks to the Owyhee jaspers and they are not all found in the same spot, but all include Owyhee as part of their name. Not only does the Owyhee area jaspers produce the scenic variety, but it also produces artistic works reminiscent of Asian paintings, modern works of art, and strong abstract color patterns. Two example of Owyhee scenic type jasper can be seen to the right, one happens to have a green sky, but Owyhee scenic also produces blue skies in some pieces. Mountains, valleys, and dunes are common scenic features, some with small dendritic plants or tree shapes.

Asian style design and paintings can often be found in the Owyhee Flower Jasper which, by the way, is also sold as Chinese Dendritic Jasper. This jasper is usually cream colored with red splotches, often connected with fine dendrites, and the red areas are often surrounded by pale green halos. The example shows warm, brown-red color zones connected by a fine series of dark lines

The Owyhee Sunset Jasper, has warmer colors, less details, but often shows us the world with a stylized sunset.



Last, but certainly not least is the Owyhee known as the Cherry Creek variety. This is my favorite type for its bright red color veining that is often surrounded by cream-yellow or even blue areas of color. Sometimes both are in the same stone. It often contains fine dendrites and resembles strong abstract art. All of the Owyhee

Jaspers appear to come from silicified mud-stones or siltstones. They are very fine grained, uniformly hard, take a great polish; they are truly porcelain jaspers of the highest quality.

From the Santa Ana Rock & Mineral Club, Via Monrovia Rockhounds



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Mexican Fire Opal

Jewel of the Month

By Gary Roskin, G.G., FGA, Senior Editor

Although nine Mexican states have produced these magnificent gems, Querétaro and Jalisco—two centrally located states—are the primary origins for most opals labeled "Mexican." And while the "Hecho en Mexico" label may not be exotic enough for some, these gems are both unique and beautiful.

History. Mexican opal has a long history, dating back as early as the 14th century, when Aztec Indians gathered the gems. Mexican residents still search for opals, digging in open-pit quarries. In this respect, not much has changed since the late 1800s.

But what has changed over the years is the definition of the term "fire opal." According to some experts, the Mexicans themselves label any opal with play-of-color as "fire opal." It wasn't until the 1970s that German gem cutters, looking for faceting material, began attaching the name "fire opal" to transparent non-play-of-color material with yellow-orange to red body color.

Today, to make the moniker more definitive, the term "precious Mexican fire opal" is now used to describe play-of-color cabochon opals with yellow-orange to red body color. Those faceted opals that do not have play-of-color—and which apparently are not precious enough for some—are called simply "Mexican fire opal."

In the past, the orangey-red to red fire opal—with or without play-of-color—has been called "cherry opal." Mexican opal also can appear in a variety of body colors, including transparent white, translucent milky white, yellow, green, "gold," blue, or bluish white ("azul"), and transparent colorless "jelly" or "crystal."

Color and quality. As with all opal, look for evenness of color as well as evenness of play-of-color. Orange and red body colors are preferred, as are the colors in the play-of-color. There is an extremely 3-D play-of-color that is highly prized. The more saturated the color, the better. Matrix opals are usually of lesser value and therefore kept in matrix, since they can't be cut into a fine-quality gem.

Prices. The extra-fine-quality material, called *Suprema*, of which only 3 or 4 stones are found per year, is sold directly to the Asian market. Prices can range from \$400 to \$4,000/ct. depending on size. Fine-quality Mexican fire opal, called *Fina*, can range from \$200/ct. to \$2,000/ct., and even this quality might be difficult to find outside Asia. *The Guide* lists Mexican fire opal—reddish-orange faceted stones greater than 5 cts., in fine quality and available domestically—at \$90/ct. to \$175/ct.

Enhancements. There are a few enhancements to watch out for when looking at Mexican fire opal in matrix. Some of the matrix opal with fractures may be Opticon-treated. Others may have been assembled to look like true opal in matrix. There is still some sugar- and smoke-treated opal, made to look like Australian black opal, but this material's appearance practically screams "treated."

Bench care and cleaning. The water content of opal affects the durability of the material. Sudden temperature or humidity changes can wreak havoc on the gem. So it's a good rule of thumb to protect opal from any type of repair—and no ultrasonic or steam cleaning! Opal also can be easily scratched or broken.

Use common sense. Stepping out of a warm house into the cold can crack an opal. Placing opals into hot showcases or window boxes can do the same. Humidity becomes a major factor in safe deposit boxes where it's warm and dry.

For the most part, you can assume that any opal you're looking at has been out of the ground for some time, long enough for the material to be adapted to your local humidity and temperature. Often, major crazing and fracturing occur in opals in the first few minutes after they've been unearthed. Experts know, however, that opals from certain localities can survive nicely for months and then start crazing. Some can become unstable even after a year.

Recommended reading. For more information, see *Opals*, by Fred Ward, Fred Ward Gem Series, 2000, Gem Book Publishers, Bethesda, Md., as well as *Gem Care*, also by Fred Ward, Fred Ward Gem Series, 2002, or e-mail: fward@erols.com.

Special thanks to Steve Jaquith at X.G.X. Corp., New York, specialists in fine Mexican fire opal.

This story appears in the April 2003 issue of JCK magazine

Drop of Water Test for Topaz

from Rock Chipper, via The Rockcollector 10/2010 and The Calgary Lapidary Journal 6/2011

Quartz and topaz are not easy to separate by eye, and sometimes it is impossible when the quartz is a true topaz color. There is a big difference in price between the two, and anyone describing quartz as "topaz," however innocently, may well be in trouble.

Topaz is quite a different mineral and is harder than quartz. Because of this, a drop of water will not spread on topaz but will spread on quartz.

Clean the stone as effectively as possible with a cloth or handkerchief to remove all traces of grease. It must be dry before the test. Then place a spot of clean water on it with a thin glass or metal rod. On stones with a hardness of less than 7 on the Mohs scale, the water is dispersed. On harder stones it will remain a globule. The harder the stone, the more rounded will be the globule.

From The Backbender's Gazette July 2011, from <http://www.hgms.org/>

More Words to Dig By

Fossil: Farmers in medieval Europe dug trenches and ditches to drain rainwater off their fields. These trenches were called "fosses" after the Latin expression meaning "to dig." Often enough, the ditch diggers uncovered what appeared to be ancient bones, teeth, or shells and called them "fossils" because they came from a fosse.

Erosion: Mice and other gnawing animals plagued the ancient Romans, and it is from their term *rodere*, "to gnaw," that we derive the word "rodent." Later, the alchemists experimented with acids and discovered that they would attack metals, slowly dissolving them. This slow corrosive action was labeled "erosion." Geologist then adopted the term erosion to describe how glaciers, streams, and rivers gnawed away sediments and rocks.

Goldbrick: Goldbricking is the shirking of one's duties, but the term had its origins during the Gold Rush days. An unscrupulous promoter would cover a block of lead with a layer of gold and offer it at a "discount" to unwary investors. The man who bought the "goldbrick" was cheated and the word came to be a verb meaning "to swindle." During World War I, however, the term acquired a somewhat different meaning. A soldier who avoided doing his duty was called a "goldbrick." The term retains its original meaning as a secondary definition.

Bonanza: Bonanza is another word that entered general use during the Gold Rush days. Derived from the Latin *bonus* for "good," the work *bonanza* was coined by Spanish sailors to describe days of clear weather coming on the heels of a storm. The term came to mean any good fortune and was applied to very rich gold discoveries. Today, the term is applied to any source of great wealth.

Source: Ref.: Garrison, W., 445 Fascinating Word Origins (Galahad Books, N. Y. 2000) 248 pp. ©2011, Andrew A. Sicree, Ph.D. *From The Glacial Drifter, Vol. 56, No. 1, January 2013, via the Rockhounder, 2/2013, of the Whittier Gem & Mineral Society.*

March 2013 Gem & Mineral Shows

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

1-3—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 (3 days), children (11 and under) free; jewelry, gems, beads, crystals, silver, rocks, minerals, more than 70 exhibitors, jewelry repair while you shop; contact Allen Van Volkinburgh, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

1-3—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, children free; fluorescent rock display and sales, more than 35 dealers, jewelry, gemstones, beads, fossils, equipment, supplies, live demonstrations, display cases, live auction, door prizes, kids' Spinning Wheel; contact Michael Tice, 3837 Parish Ave., Fremont, CA 94536, (510) 791-2785; e-mail: 4ticitice@comcast.net; Web site: www.mgscv.org

2-3—ARCADIA, CA: Annual show; Monrovia Rockhounds; The Arboretum & Botanic Gardens; Ayers Hall, 301 Baldwin Ave.; Sat. 9-4:30, Sun. 9-4:30; adults \$8, seniors and students \$6, children \$3; contact Jo Anna Ritchey, 224 Oaks Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016, (626) 359-1624; e-mail: joannaritchey@gmail.com; Web site: www.moroks.com

2-3—VENTURA, CA: 51st annual show; Ventura Gem & Mineral Society; Ventura County Fairgrounds; 10 W. Harbor Blvd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; free admission; member and guest displays of gems, minerals, fossils, lapidary arts, lapidary and jewelry making demonstrations, door prizes, silent auctions, Country Store, dealers, children's activities; contact Krishna Juarez, PO Box 1573, Ventura, CA 93002, (805) 320-1094; e-mail: abaris2007@gmail.com; Web site: www.vgms.org

8-10—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 (3 days), children (11 and under) free; jewelry, gems, beads, crystals, silver, rocks, minerals, more than 70 exhibitors, jewelry repair while you shop; contact Allen Van Volkinburgh, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

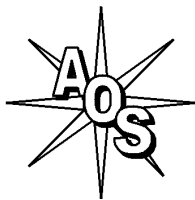
8-10—VICTORVILLE, CA: 37th Annual Outdoor Tailgate; Victor Valley Gem & Mineral Club; Stoddard Wells; Stoddard Wells Rd., 12 miles east of I-15; Fri. 8-5, Sat. 8-5, Sun. 8-5; free admission; Sat. field trip for Verde Antique marble, dealers, handcrafted and faceted jewelry, slabs, cabs, minerals, fossils, findings, equipment, rough material; contact Brett Ward, (760) 243-2330; Web site: [vvgmc.org](http://www.vvgmc.org)

9-10—SAN MARINO, CA: Annual show; Pasadena Lapidary Society; San Marino Masonic Center; 3130 Huntington Dr.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; free admission; "Rocks Through The Ages", member displays, lapidary demonstrations, dealers, minerals, rough material, jewelry, gems, collectibles; contact Marcia Goetz, (626) 260-7239

9-10—SPRECKELS, CA: Annual show; Salinas Valley Rock & Gem Club, Spreckels Vets Hall; Spreckels Vets Halls; 5th St. and Llano St.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission; jewelry, gems, crystals, minerals, fossils, craft supplies, beads, fluorescent display, member displays, hourly door prizes,

demonstrations, raffle; contact Karin Salomon, (831) 375-5233; e-mail: kcbakes27@yahoo.com; Web site: salinasrockandgem.com
 9-10—TURLOCK, CA: Annual show; Mother Lode Mineral Society; Stanislaus County Fairgrounds; 900 N. Broadway; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$6, children (12 and under) free; rocks, minerals, jewelry, exhibits of dinosaur fossils, shark jaws, jewelry and polished stones, jewelry-making demonstrations, children's activities, bracelet making, soapstone carving, fluorescent display tent; contact Chris Whittier, 3813 Amigo Dr., Modesto, CA 95356, (209) 368-2797; e-mail: webmaster@motherlodemineralsociety.com; Web site: www.turlockgemshow.com
 16-17—LEMOORE, CA: Annual show; Lemoore Gem & Mineral Club; Trinity Hall; 470 Champion St.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; free admission; agate and jasper from around the world, fluorescent mineral display, lapidary rough and supplies, gems, minerals, beads, fossils, jewelry, stone carvings, reference books, rock-cutting demonstrations; contact Chris Wertenberger, PO Box 455, Lemoore, CA 93245-0455, (559) 309-3433
 16-17—SEATTLE, WA: Annual show; North Seattle Lapidary & Mineral Club; Lake City Community Center; 12531 28th Ave. NE; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission; junior activities, displays, demonstrations, dealers, club group project; contact Susan Gardner, (425) 483-2295; e-mail: sgardner3@mindspring.com; Web site: www.NorthSeattleRockClub.org
 16-17—VALLEJO, CA: Annual ; Vallejo Gem & Mineral Society; Solano County Fairgrounds, Mc Cormick Hall; 900 Fairgrounds Dr.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$5, children (under 14) free with adult; dealers, beads, crystals, opals, jade, turquoise, meteorites, door prizes, silent auction, wheel of fortune; contact Dan Wolke, 900 Fairgrounds Dr., Civic Bldg., Vallejo, CA 94589, (707) 745-1816; e-mail: dncwolke@sbcglobal.net; Web site: vallejojemandmineral.com
 16-17—VISTA, CA: Annual show; Palomar Gem & Mineral Club; Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum; 2040 N. Santa Fe Ave.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; free admission; displays, dealers, gems, mineral, fossils, jewelry, door prize,

general store, demonstrations, children's activities; contact Diane Hall, 528 Shadywood Dr., Escondido, CA 92026, (760) 741-0433; e-mail: dhall13@cox.net; Web site: www.palomargem.org
 23-24—ANGELS CAMP, CA: Annual show; Calaveras Gem & Mineral Society; Calaveras County Fairgrounds (Frogtown); 101 Frogtown Rd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; adults \$4, children (under 12) free with adult; jewelry, gemstones, beads, fossils, meteorites, rocks, tools, minerals, kids' area, silent auction, raffle, door prizes; contact Anna Christiansen, 245 N. 6th Ave., Oakdale, CA 95361-3124, (209) 847-1173; e-mail: achrist361@sbcglobal.net; Web site: calaverasgemandmineral.org
 23-24—TORRANCE, CA: 64th annual show and sale; South Bay Lapidary & Mineral Society; Ken Miller Recreation Center; 3341 Torrance Blvd., entrance on Madrona Ave.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; free admission; door prizes, special guest exhibitors and demonstrators, fluorescent mineral show, petrified forest display, polished stones, slabs, rough rock, Artisans Store featuring handmade jewelry; contact Bill Sudduth, (310) 787-7851; e-mail: Sudduth3@msn.com; Web site: www.palosverdes.com/sblap
 23-25—ROSEVILLE, CA: 51st Annual Gem Show; Roseville Rock Rollers Gem & Mineral Society; Roseville (Placer County) Fairgrounds; 800 All America City Blvd., off WA; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; adults \$6, seniors \$5 (coupon on Web site), children (12 and under) free; two huge buildings, more than 45 dealers, crystals, beads, gemstones, handcrafted jewelry, gold panning, fossils, meteorites, polished stones, opal, world-class mineral specimens, tourmaline, gold, sunstones, special kids' activity area, free gem and mineral identification, demonstrations, silent auctions, more than 35 exhibits, raffle, hourly door prizes, lapidary shop open house; contact Gloria Marie, PO Box 1547, Foresthill, CA 95631, (916) 216-1114; e-mail: gloriarosevillerockrollers@gmail.com; Web site: www.rockrollers.com



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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:
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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 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.

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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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The Opal Express

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

**Volume #46 Issue #3
March 2013**

Some Topics In This Issue:

- Anaheim Arts Council Fund Raiser
- How to Kill Your Club in 13 Easy Steps
- And How to Resurrect an Ailing Club
- Bernhardt Holtermann's Gold Nugget
- Opal Discovery Sparks Excitement
- From Rags to Riches – Ch. 32 Gunshots
- Owyhee Jasper
- Mexican Fire Opal
- Drop of Water Test for Topaz
- More Words to Dig By

Important Dates:

- March 7 – Board Meeting:
- March 14 - General Meeting:
Michael Greyshock on Gold
Detecting in California

— GENERAL MEETINGS —

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

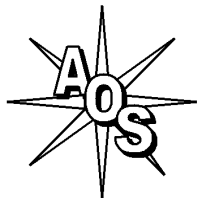
Garden Grove Civic Women's Club
9501 Chapman Ave.
Garden Grove, CA 92841
(NE corner of Gilbert & Chapman)

MEETING ACTIVITIES

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

TO:

March 14 **Michael Greyshock on** **Gold Detecting in** **California**



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

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