

NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE AMERICAN OPAL SOCIETY →

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January 1979

"GROWING YOUR OWN JEWELRY"...

proved to be a most interesting topic for the January meeting. The process, Electroforming, is attracting an ever expanding circle of devotees, for fun and we imagine, profit.

Arrayed at the front of our meeting room on January 11th., was a seemingly complicated maze of Wires, flasks, and chemicals resembling a chemistry laboratory. Under the gentle and knowledgeable guidance of Bill Judd, the maze became understandable, as he conversationally led us through the distinct steps of the electroplating process, and, the electro-forming. A view of the audience, some 60 persons, showed rapt attention. A most valuable session, which will be sure to be repeated by popular demand.

We thank our Members, both new and old, for the gracious treatment accorded to the many Guests present.

* * * COMING EVENTS * * *

The February meeting will give all of you Lapidaries a chance to sharpen your skills by viewing a film on each step toward the forming and polishing of a beautiful opal. It's an excellent film in full color and sound. The date: February 8th., 1979. The time: 7:30 P.M.. The place: Apollo Community Center.

In March, we shall present a session on evaluating and appraising opal. (This program was originally announced for February.) The date will be March 8th. Watch for further details in the February Newsletter!!

Suggestions are respectfully solicited for field trips beginning in the Spring. Any trip should be of one or two day duration, over a weekend, and have an opal connected destination. Let's hear your ideas, everybody!! Bring them up at the next general meeting, or mail them to John Hall, at the Newsletter Post Office Box 503, Fullerton, Ca. 92632. John will coordinate and as a group, we'll make some plans.

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Should you have a mining operation that would encourage AOS visitors, please let the Newsletter Staff know the details. We'd like to publish promptly, so that our Fellow Members can plan a-head into your operating season.

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* * * OPAL PROWLING IN KOREA * * *

Bursting with a vitality as never before, the Far East enjoys affluence. Opal shares in the display of this affluence as one of the most popular gemstones in Japan.

Quite contrary to some superstition imbued European countries, Orientals consider opal to be a symbol of luck and good fortune.

On a recent trip to Korea, for example, the opal theme was subtly, but continuously apparent. By that I mean, if you were looking, opal was everywhere.

Starting at the Los Angeles ticket counter of Korean Airlines, from the finger of the reservations agent, flashed the familiar vivid color play of an Australian white of about six carats.

Korea, as you may know, produces vast quantities of topaz quartz and amethyst. In any major city, and even off into the villages, shops display an infinite variety of "Smoky Topaz". This material can be of remarkable richness and uniformity of color, varying in hue from almost beige to a deep rich brown, nearly black. The most sought after is a medium rich brown, which when faceted presents a clear color and light refraction from the inner recesses of the stone. This brown topaz quartz is seen in every shape and size imaginable. Faceted and cabochons; even high domed cabs with the bottom surface faceted. A broad range of quality may be found, but a stone of good color, and with acceptable cut, unmounted, may be purchased for \$10.00 a carat. Attractive "Citrine Quartz" is also commonly available, perhaps in less volume, either because it is less popular, or perhaps not as much is mined.

Korea is also proud of its Amethyst Quartz, a lovely range of color in reddish-purple, purple, and lavender. Korean amethyst quartz is often badly faceted, without even reasonable symmetry to the

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interrelating planes. It is a challenge to seek out and find a well cut stone, especially by "eye balling" through a heap of stones. Korean amethyst can get quite expensive and a well faceted stone with an appealing, most sought after, reddish-purple cast, will sell for as much as \$100.00 a carat.

A rewarding experience, not unlike digging through tailings, can be the discovery of stones with all the qualities deserved of the lapidary art, at a bargain price. It's an irresistible search!!

Perhaps not surprising to Korea-Ophiles, but certainly to me, was the little collection here and there of opal in the Korean Jade, "Topaz", and Amethyst Shops. Generally, the opal was Hong Kong cut small stones, brought out only if someone asked. Vivid in color, dominating in greens (from what I saw in over two dozen different shops), but cut as if the lapidary had rolled up his sleeves after four martinis!

Scouting the better jewelry shops of Seoul was a different matter! Exquisitely shaped, three to twenty carat opals gleamed in dominantly high domed cabochon 'cuts. Mostly attributed to Australian sources, fine quality stones set in white and yellow gold and silver commanded rather dear prices. They seemed to run 30% to 40% higher than those in the U.S. Perhaps this may be traced to import duties. It's hard to say, and I didn't have a chance to authoritatively inquire. I will though. It couldn't be the exchange rate, since from December to December, the Korean Yon/Dollar exchange varied by only 1%, while during the same period, the price of a cup of coffee in Japan, for Americans, jumped from \$1.00 to \$1.30.

In one jewelry store in the flung Dong-Po area, I was pleased to see an Australian white in an elongated cabochon combining intense reds and greens side by side with both a Mexican crystal opal (high domed cab of 10 carats), and a round Honey of 5 carats, the later with a color play of broad flash, green on the surface, with repeated inner color within the stone.

Opal gift giving is the vogue!! - Presenting the gem of good fortune to the Lady in one's life, as an example. Somehow it seems fitting that opal, the omen of luck and the good things of life be associated with Korea where the gentility and intelligence of the people is devoted to the struggle of creating a better life after 70 years of hostility.

Submitted by Larry Dobrin . . .

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* * * PHOENIX CHAPTER NEWS * * *

NOTICES . . .

We welcomed as our guest, Mr. Ben Brozek. We enjoyed having him join us.

We received notice that the Seattle Chapter has removed themselves from the AOS.

We received a letter from Larry Dobrin thanking us for our input to the new AOS by-laws, now being drafted, and for our suggestions and contribution to the drafting. Larry is also making copies of the tapes from the Seminar talks for our use. He sent a copy of the material relevant to those interested in Electroforming.

NEW BUSINESS

Nominations were submitted for the 1979 slate of Phoenix Chapter Officers and elections were held. The 1979 Officer roster as duly nominated and elected are:

PRESIDENT:	P. J. and Peggy Warner
VICE PRES:	E. D, (Ed) Roud
SECRETARY/	
TREASURER:	Floyd and Alice Getsinger

PROGRAM

Louise presented some ads from the Desert Fiesta Ninth Annual Rock Show for January 19 - 20th, and for the Tenth Annual Flagg-Mineral Festival for Jan. 27-28th. Mr. Getsinger gave a very interesting talk about the beginnings of the Flagg Foundation, and what it's great expectations are now. He promises to make up a slide story to present to us soon.

While we enjoyed our refreshments, Joe presented a show of slides from the collection of Barrie O'Leary on opal mining in Australia.

The Phoenix Chapter meets the third Thursday of each month at:
2301 N. Miller Road
Scottsdale, Arizona

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PERSONALS . . .

We were saddened to hear that Shirley Barnett, wife of Richard. Barnett, owners of the Barnett Opal Mine at Red Rock, suffered a coronary on December 31, 197a. After weeks in the hospital, we are happy to report that Shirley is back home and recuperating nicely. Our very best wishes to you, Shirley, on a very speedy recovery. We look forward to seeing you back on the job at the Mine and. in your Shop.

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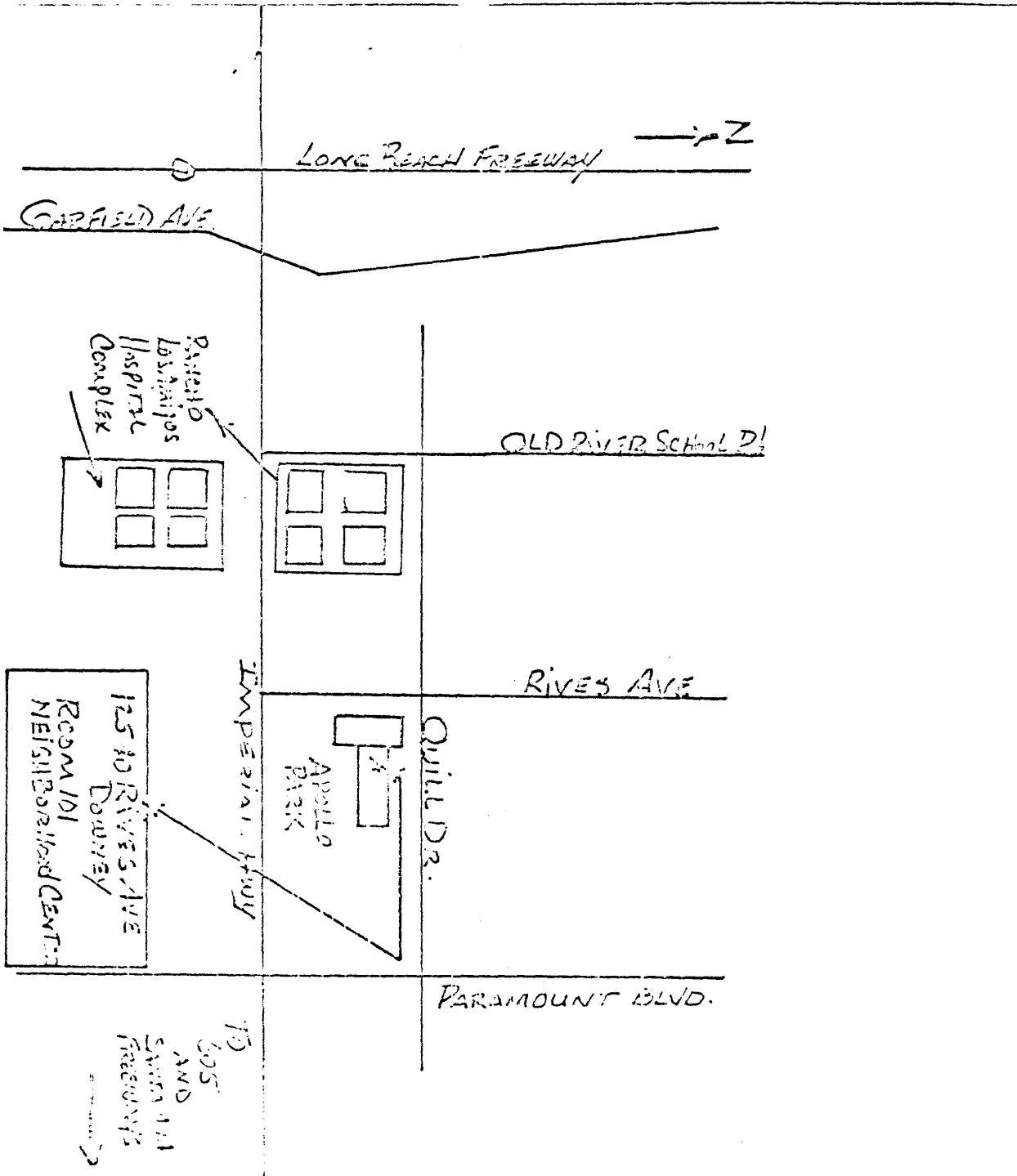
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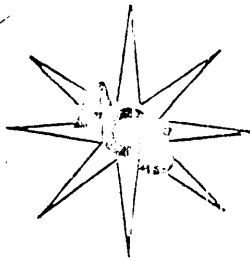
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