

The Opal Express

American Opal Society
 P.O. Box 382
 Anaheim, CA 92815-0382



Member

Member



Volume #30 Issue #11 November 1998

**GENERAL MEETING THURSDAY
 NOVEMBER 12TH 7PM**

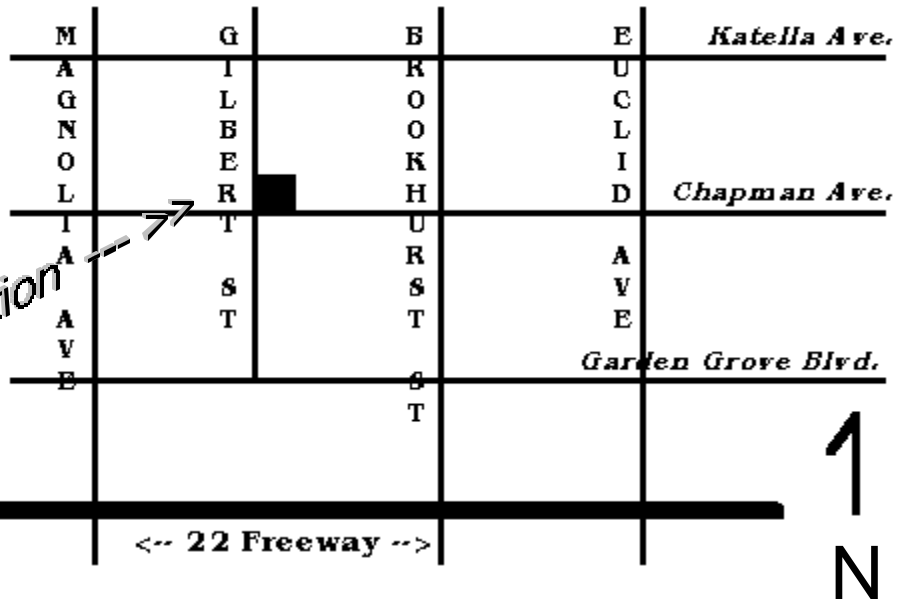
**31st Annual OPAL & GEM Show
 Saturday & Sunday Nov 7 & 8**

TO:

GENERAL MEETINGS —
 2nd Thursday 7:00-9:00 PM
 Garden Grove Civic Women's Club
 9501 Chapman Ave.
 (NE corner of Gilbert & Chapman)
 Garden Grove, CA

MEETING ACTIVITIES
 Opal Cutting Advice Guest Speakers
 Slide Shows Videos Other Activities

Meeting Location →



American Opal Society Officers



Wes Roth	President	(714) 897-2843 email wesroth@earthlink.net
Carol Bova	Vice Pres.	(818) 845-8610 email bova@bovagems.com
Mike Kowalsky	Treasurer	(714) 761-4876 email mykowalsky@aol.com
Pete Goetz	Secretary	(714) 666-2084 email mpg1022@aol.com
Russ Madsen	Editor	(562) 425-9788 email 76550.1366@compuserve.com

DUES POLICY REVISED - effective 1/1/98

Henceforth, memberships begin in the month a person joins the Opal Society. This simplifies the fee structure and will reduce questions and errors in dues payments.

Three (3) Dues Rates are for families and **are now based on your county of residence.**

Rate #1 (\$26): **Local area** = members who reside in Los Angeles, Orange, or Riverside counties.

Rate #2 (\$20): **California & USA** = all US addresses other than local counties.

Rate #3 (\$30): **Foreign** = all memberships outside USA.

SENIOR DISCOUNT: Age 65 and over, deduct \$5 from the above rates.

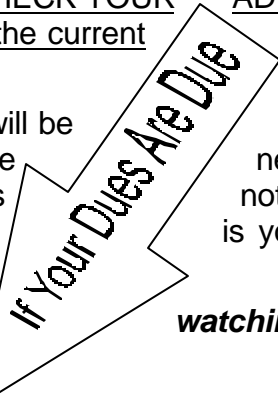
Label Changes: Your address label now displays your dues expiration date as MM-YY where MM is the month and YY is the year your dues expire. Expiration dates also appear in the membership roster.

Are Your Dues Due Now? PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL or the membership roster if you are listed there. If your label shows the current month/year your dues are **DUE NOW**. If the date is older, your dues are **overdue**.

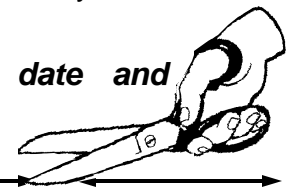
Renewal Grace Period of two months will be received. If your dues are due now you will receive two additional issues of the newsletter. Please note however that as the system is now set up, if your renewal is not received you will be **AUTOMATICALLY** dropped from membership thereafter. It is your responsibility to assure your dues are current.

provided. If your dues are due now you will receive two additional issues of the newsletter. Please note however that as the system is now set up, if your renewal is not received you will be **AUTOMATICALLY** dropped from membership thereafter. It is your responsibility to assure your dues are current.

Please help us make this work by renewing promptly. Thanks!



watching your expiration date and



DUES RENEWAL FORM

(membership renewal form rev. 1/1/98) d:\ameropal\newstrs\forms\dues_due.pub



American Opal Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 382
Anaheim, CA 92815-0382

Thank you for continuing to support your American Opal Society!!

Make check or money order payable to: American Opal Society, Inc.

Please mail payment and renewal form to the club address at left.

DUES RENEWAL RATES (select one)**	
1) LOCAL AREA member	\$26.00
<small>(addresses in Los Angeles, Orange, & Riverside counties)</small>	
2) CALIFORNIA & USA	\$20.00
<small>(all addresses outside local area counties)</small>	
3) FOREIGN	\$30.00
<small>(all addresses outside USA)</small>	
** \$5 SENIOR DISCOUNT = Age 65 or over <deduct \$5.00 from above>	

DEALER LIST: Yes, include my name/address on a list provided to Opal Dealers selling at the most recent Opal Show.

(if yes, please sign or initial here) _____ date _____

without your signature here you will not be included in the dealer info list

MEMBERSHIP ROSTER: Yes, include my name and/or address and/or phone information in a published AOS membership directory...

[Please circle any of these → **NAME** / **ADDRESS** / **PHONE** if you prefer a partial listing.]

(if yes please sign or initial here) _____ date _____

without your signature here you will not be included in the member roster

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____ APT #: _____ or PO BOX: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

C O U N T R Y (I F O U T S I D E U . S .)

NAME BADGE ORDER FORM: (OPTIONAL)

Number of badges ordered _____

(\$5.00 EACH - includes engraving)

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.

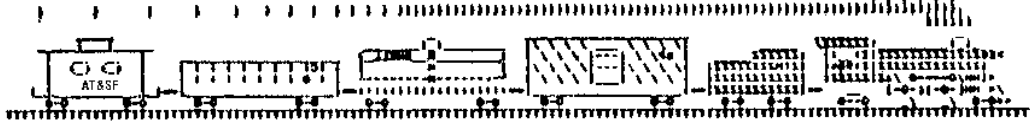
Please indicate any name or mailing address changes

The OPAL EXPRESS

ZODIAC PUBLISHING

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by the
American
Opal
Society

Issue 11



President's Message

from Wes Roth

Greetings,

IT'S SHOWTIME !!!!

By the time you read this the 31st Annual Opal Show will just be a couple of days away.

To everyone, on behalf of the entire Board, I would like to say Thank You for your time and for your donations for the show. By Sunday evening we should all be tired but pleased with our accomplishments; the 31st. American Opal Society Show that members, dealers, and friends can be proud to have produced.

Due to recent events, a very special Thank You to all the dealers who have loaned and/or contributed opal specimens to the Opal Society's display, as well as to those who anticipate contributing at the show.

On the 18th of October Harriette Breitman taught a class on the Fundamentals of Opal/Gemstone Carving for a group of the club members. Harriette's presentation covered materials necessary and where to obtain them, safety measures, and a short discussion about the types and hardness of good carving material. A good time was had by all and much was learned in a short period of time. Many of us left the class with a greater understanding and appreciation of carving, as well as a nice first effort for our display cases. For those of you who didn't get a chance to attend or if you just want more information, Harriette will be lecturing on Sunday at the Show.

Bit of local news..

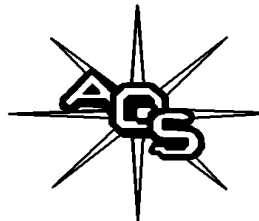
Approximately 2 months ago, on September 3rd while doing construction at the Los Angeles

Arco Refinery, what appeared to a human skull was unearthed by one of the workers. After forensic work was done, speculation is that a burial site of the Gabrielino Indians dating back approximately 1000 years, and predating the arrival of the Spaniards, may have been discovered. Further research is still being done at this time.

See you at the Show and hopefully at the meeting the following Thursday...

Wes Roth
President

You might be a rockhound if....you have a mineralogical database on your computer.



Dates to
Remember

1998
Opal Show
Nov 7th & 8th

November
General Mtg.
Thurs Nov 12th
7PM

Work Shop Information...

The Opal Society workshop is located in a light industrial complex in Fullerton. The address is Unit #9, 651 N. State College Blvd.

Directions: exit the 91 Fwy onto State College Blvd. and go north. Proceed through the intersection of Orangethorpe continuing a short distance further on State College. Go over the railroad tracks and turn left into the complex on the west side of the street. If you go over the second RR crossing turn around. Proceed behind the front row of businesses and make your first right. Then follow the road around to the left. The workshop has a large "9" over the door.

Only AOS members may use the equipment and workshop. You will be required to sign a release form as well.

Workshop Schedule on Page 5 shows dates/times and appointment instructions. ☼

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OPAL SHOW NEWS

1998 marks the 31st annual American Opal Society Opal & Gem Show and we are looking forward to another great Opal Show. **Show dates are this coming weekend November 7th & 8th.** The Show opens at 10AM both days and closes at 7PM Saturday, 5PM Sunday. Note especially however that the Opal Symposium on Sunday begins at 9AM (see below for details).

A fine array of opal dealers will be on hand offering rough material, cut stones and finished jewelry. There will be demonstrations of lapidary and jewelry arts as well.

Our Opal Symposium this year will include **featured guest speaker Bob Jones of Rock & Gem magazine.** You won't want to miss this chance to see Bob's fine photography and hear him speak on the subject of Australia chrysoprase.

In addition, Tim Thomas will continue his popular talk from last year, Opal Cutting Challenges. Please be aware that Tim's going to begin his presentation Sunday morning promptly at 9AM (not when the show opens at 10AM).

We will again enjoy Barbara McCondra's enthusiastic style of recounting her adventures in the outback and Walt Johnson's practical knowledge of metalsmithing. We are pleased to welcome this year, AOS member and professional carver, Harriette Breitman as a guest speaker. Harriette will present the topic – Fundamentals of Carving, Opals and other Gemstones.

Opal Symposium Schedule

SATURDAY TALKS

Barbara McCondra	10 AM
Bob Jones	1 PM
Walter Johnson	3 PM

SUNDAY TALKS

Tim Thomas	9 AM
Harriette Breitman	11 AM

Name Badges...

Price per badge is \$5 which includes the badge itself and engraving of up to two lines of text: one line for your first and last name and, if you wish, a second line for nickname or if applicable, your opal related business name. These engraving options give members flexibility to include many types of identification.

Please allow 3 to 4 weeks for completion of engraving. ❁

NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING

Two Guest Speakers

7 PM Thursday Nov 12 at the regular meeting room in Garden Grove we will enjoy two talks. **Mike Kowalsky** is going to continue his presentation about traveling in Australia. This talk will feature a number of interesting facets of the Queen of Gems. Mike has video footage of Len Cram's opal lab showing the various jars of opal Len has grown. There will also be pictures from Lightning Ridge and Yowah and maps of the regions. In addition Mike will display examples of Yowah and Lightning Ridge rough including the "Chinaman's Hat" opal formations unique to LR. For this talk Mike will discuss their experiences in both LR and Yowah. In January Mike will speak about Andamooka, watch for details in a future issue of the Opal Express.

In addition to Mike's talk about Australia, we will hear from **Bob Dixon** about his trip to Camp Paradise in the mountains near Marysville, California. Camp Paradise was the northern California equivalent to the spring classes at Zzyzx Rd. Bob reports there were several topics of study and many activities. Attendees were able to learn more about faceting, carving, wire wrapping, casting, and lapidary. Gold panning and rock collecting at local sites were also on the agenda of activity choices. ❁

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The Opal Express, P.O. Box 382, Anaheim, CA 92815-0382
E-mail 76550.1366@compuserve.com
(Deadline for items: 15th of the month prior to each issue)

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

#1179 Victor Hoffman
#1177 / 1178 Richard & Karin Holmes
#1176 Martha J. Mills
#0388 Pat Smallwood



Membership Roster Changes/Additions

New Listing - Victor Hoffman 11	1001 W. Lambert Rd., La Habra, CA 90631	(562) 691-5895	Member # 1179	Dues Expire 99-
- Martha J. Mills	P.O. Box 5542, Reno, NV 89513	(702) 972-0400	Member #1176	Dues Expire 99-11
- Pat Smallwood	10718 Clancey Ave., Downey, CA 90241	(562) 923-1851	Member # 0388	Dues Expire 99-11
- Richard & Karin Holmes	1375 Santa Monica Rd., Carpentaria, CA 93013		Member #1177/78	Dues Expire 99-11

Advertisement

GREAT DEALS ON ROUGH AUSTRALIAN OPAL AND CUT STONES. Great value rough opal, very stable, all price ranges. White base to multicolor crystal. Rough stones have not been picked over. Stable cut stones from all fields, all price ranges, all grades. Dealers, jewelers, hobbyists all welcome. (818) 785-7394 or write to LAND OF WONDER, Eric Scott, P.O. Box 261142, Encino, CA 91426-1142

He who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are closed.

-Albert Einstein

December General Meeting



ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER



Watch the December Opal Express for details

← COUPON →

← COUPON →

31st Annual OPAL SHOW and Sale

Saturday & Sunday November 7th & 8th,

!!! 1998 OPAL SHOW !!!

Quality Maingate Hotel (same location since 1990)
616 Convention Way, Anaheim, CA (714) 750-3131
(Harbor Blvd.-1 block so. of Katella)



Dont Miss The Show!

!!! DISCOUNT ADMISSION COUPON !!!

OPAL SYMPOSIUM begins at 10 AM Saturday and 9 AM Sunday

Saturday 10AM – 7PM, Sunday 10AM – 5PM
 Adults \$3.50, students with ID \$1.50, Children under 12 \$1.00
 PARKING VALIDATION \$1.00 (with admission)

\$.50 off admission with this coupon
 (good for each person in your group)

American Opal Society, Inc.



Workshop news

We have renewed our workshop sharing arrangement with the Searchers for an additional 6 months. Several AOS members and dealers have stepped up to provide opal samples for the club show case. This is the kind of support that makes our club strong and we gratefully thank those who have assisted in making up the loss suffered when the club storage cabinet was vandalized. Nothing further has turned up in that regard unfortunately. ❄

SOLDERING SECRETS OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS

Ancient Egyptian goldsmiths soldered their work by a most clever, but secret, process that remained a great mystery until modern chemistry recently discovered the secret. Egyptians would solder dainty wire filigree and granular gold to a surface without flux or flooding the work with solder. The goldsmiths mixed ground copper carbonate, or malachite, with glue. The adhesive was used to stick the grains of gold or wire into place or to coat and hold the adjacent edges of the parts to be joined.

The work was then heated on a charcoal brazier with the assistance of a blow pipe on those areas which had to be raised to the highest temperatures. At 200 C, the copper carbonate changes into copper oxides. At 600 C, the adhesive becomes completely carbonized. At 850 C, a curious phenomenon occurs. The gold in contact with the copper melts to form a solder joint, well below the melting point of gold. The process had great advantages for the ancient goldsmiths. There is no precipitation of flux to throw small pieces of solder off the piece being worked, and the various parts were already stuck together by the dried adhesive before heat was applied.

All that was required to be done, once the mixture was correctly prepared and applied, was to carefully heat the piece over a bed of glowing charcoal. The beauty of this process is that the work can be subsequently reheated a number of times without the risk of unfastening joints that had previously been made. ❄

(from Stoney Statements, via the pegmatite 9/98)

The world's oldest and largest meteorite has been discovered in China near the northeast city of Shenyang. The meteorite, locally called Huashitai Hill, is estimated to be 4.5 to 4.6 billion years old and fell to earth 1.9 billion years ago. The meteorite mound is 600 feet long, 250 feet wide and about 300 feet deep. It weights about 2 million tons and is covered with granite. The meteorite is older than any natural earth rock. The site is planned to be a state protected nature reserve. ❄

(from Rocky Trails via AFMS Newsletter 9/98)

Workshop schedule

Be sure to check here for workshop schedule updates. The dates listed below are those available to the AOS in our time share agreement with the Searchers. The shop is presently being opened to members on Wednesday nights but... **Please continue to contact Stan McCall by calling him at Lapidary Intl. (714) 827-5680 if you plan to attend a shop session.**

November 1998

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

WORKSHOP RULES

These rules are effective October 1, 1997. Please see newsletter for monthly shop schedule.

- 1) Shop may only be used by AOS members.
- 2) Shop users must sign liability waiver.
- 3) Shop users must sign in. Shop supervisor will maintain sign-in list and collect usage fees.
- 4) Shop usage will be in sessions on scheduled days as noted below:
 - Session #1 10AM - 2PM
 - Session #2 2PM - 6PM
 - Session #3 6PM - 9PM
- 5) Shop usage fees: effective immediately...
SHOP USAGE FEE IS \$3 PER SESSION.
- 6) To assist us in scheduling, shop sessions need to be reserved in advance. Please contact Stan McCall or any member of the board of directors to reserve shop time.

Vibrator Tumbler for Opals

(The following item from Lapidary Digest begins with an inquiry about tumble-polishing opal. The respondent then describes a method to accomplish this.)

<<I'm an opal cutter in Australia. Most of my stones are cut by hand but I have a number of free forms that I would like to tumble in a vibrator.

Does anyone know who supplies the vibrator tumblers that will fit multiple bowls at the right price.... and can you give me some advice on the right grits to use. I've been told that 220, 400, 600 and tin oxide will do the trick.

I have experimented before using these but found the final polish was difficult to get. It was still quite mat, and not shiny enough.>>

Dear Peter,

Your initial grit would depend on how rough the surface was. Unless you have jagged edges, 220 grit is going to drastically cut into the opal and change the shape. Given a non-pitted surface and smooth edges you might even just use the 600 grit before polish.

I used to have a problem with the final polish until a jeweler friend recommended using Crystallite "A" (can be ordered from 1-800-777-2894 as C5412620, priced at \$30 US for 4 ounces). I've gotten much better results with that than other polishes. I have no financial interest in the company or product.

Here is a procedure that I was given for vibratory tumblers with soft stones:

1) Hand mix the stones with an equal volume of fluffed laundry drier lint. This keeps the stones from banging on one another and leaving chips to damage the work.

2) Use extreme care between each stage to take just the stones, then wash them and the bowl carefully. A separate bowl for each grit is a good idea as well. Discard the lint between grits.

3) Check often, particularly if you are used to rotating tumblers. Vibratory tumblers work much faster and if you vibrate too long the grit or polish starts undoing the progress it had made.

I trust I don't have to tell you not to pour grit down the drain in less you want to become your local plumber's best friend.

Jerry Mings

(from Lapidary Digest #149 6/25/98)

Carving Workshop a Success

(The following letter from Harriette Breitman addressed to AOS president Wes Roth highlights her recent carving workshop hosted by the AOS...)

Dear Wes:

Many Thanks to you and the Opal Society for providing the meeting place for our gem carving session.

The group of people that took the class seemed to enjoy themselves very much learning the fundamentals of gem carving while having fun.

Thanks also for the lovely sandwich tray.

We had 13 people and each went home with a "carving" while at the beginning of the class it was just a "rock".

Here are the diversified selections that were produced:

- a fish in howlite
- a bear in howlite
- a flower following the lines in howlite
- a flower pot/with bird of paradise and rose.

Our president did an abstract design to be in-set, his wife carved a beautiful stylized swan in Black Obsidian. We had one initial carved in precious opal to be inlaid in a wonderful hand made wooden guitar, a face of a cute red fox, a critter on a stylized leaf, an eagle to be set in a bolo tie, a cute Panda bear, and finally a buffalo with a little dog.

Altogether a very accomplished day well spent.

Again many thanks

Sincerely, Harriette Breitman

Happy Thanksgiving 

...the class
seemed to en-
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learn the fun-
damentals of
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while
having
fun



11. Expose the color-band

11

- Using the 600 Disc, continue going over the dome until you expose the proper color-band for optimal fire.
- ⇒ **Do not chase color!** Be aware of your stone - inspect it frequently under strong light with water on the stone. While there **are** different layers of fire in a color-band, do not keep grinding down until there is **no** color left!



side view of stone with color-band

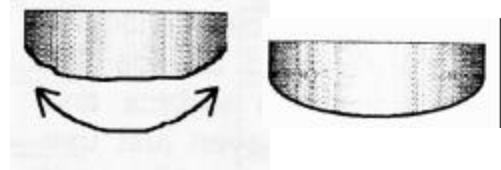


side view with color-band fully exposed

12. Fine-grind the dome, part II

12

- Using the 1200 Mesh Aqua Diamond Disc, carefully go over the dome with smooth, constant rocking motions in all directions.
- ⇒ Dry the stone and inspect it frequently.
- ⇒ All visible grinding marks should be removed with this step.



side views

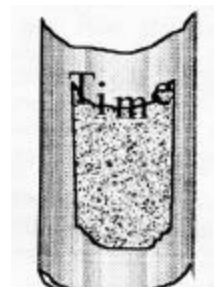
13. Hand-sand the dome

13

- Lay a quadrant of silicon carbide sandpaper, 220 grit, on a pamphlet or small magazine.
- Bracing the backing so that it curves slightly, take your dopped stone and sand in a swirling motion of ellipses, while continuously rotating the dop stick.



top view sp & mag

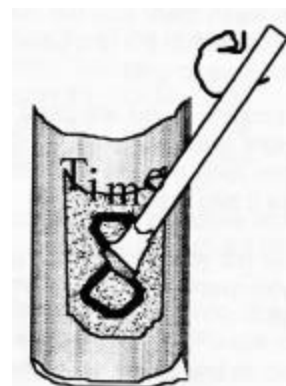


top view, curved

⇒ **Detecting Flat or Rough Spots**

Wiping the stone clean between passes, use the reflection of the parallel fluorescent light bulbs to scan for flat spots which must be removed.

- Hold the stone so that you can see a band of reflected light on the surface.
- Rotate the stone slowly in all directions, watching the band of light. Where the dome is smooth, the band will be continuous. If a flat spot is present, the band will distort.



top view, curved, with stone on dop stick, sanding in ellipses (or 8s), while rotating

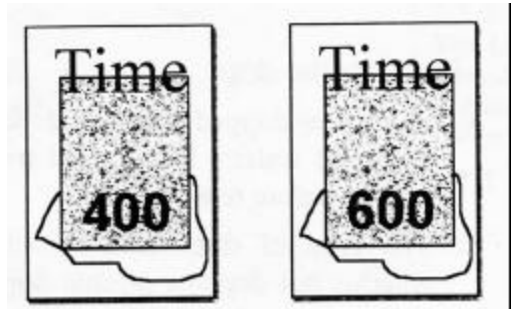
14. Fine-sanding the dome

- Repeat step 12 with 400 grit sandpaper and then with 600 grit sandpaper.
- For an extra-fine, quick polish, sand briefly with 1200 grit sandpaper.

⇒ In addition to inspecting the stone by light reflection, inspect the stone with a 10x viewer for fine detail.

⇒ If you have a long-distance viewer, scan by light reflection using the 10x viewer for the most accuracy.

14



top view of different grit sandpaper



mixed view, 10x viewer and stone

15. Polish the stone

⇒ **Do not proceed to this step until ALL scratches or flat spots are removed.**

- a) Rinse your hands and the dopped stone to remove any dirt or grit.
- b) Go back to the flat-lap and put on the White Tech-10 Pad, applying a small amount of the polishing compound.

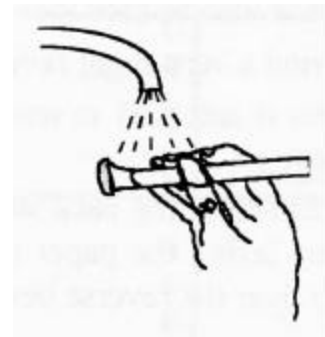
This pad is **not** used with water.

◆ WARNING

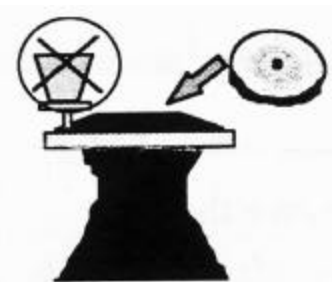
Do not allow the stone to overheat! Continuously check the stone for build-up.

- c) Gently but firmly apply the stone to the disc, rotating and rocking it in the same manner used for grinding.
- d) Wipe the stone off with a dry cloth and inspect the quality of the polish.
- e) Inspect the stone with light reflection. If there are any flat spots, you will need to fine-sand again until you have a perfect dome.
- f) Continue polishing until there is no more improvement to the fire and shine of the stone.

15



side view, rinse

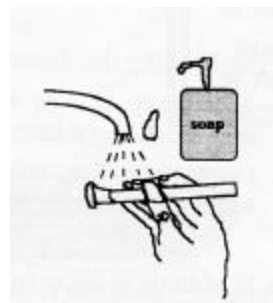


side view, flat-lap w/White Pad, no water

16. Remove the dop

- Wash the dopped stone and dop stick with soap and water. Remove all traces of polish residue before removing dop.
- ⇒ The type of dop removal will depend on whether hot dopping or cold dopping was initially used. Use the appropriate method for your needs.

16

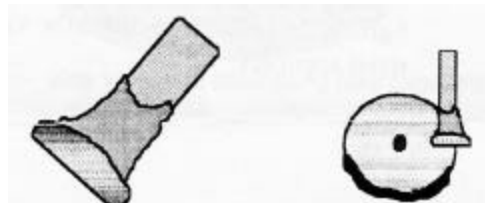


side view, wash

17. Finish the back of the stone

- a) Dop the stone on the top side.
- b) Grind the back smoothly with the 600 Disc, removing all excess potch material. Be careful of the stone, as the polished surface does not hold the dop as firmly as the rough surface did. Use only light pressure. Make sure the back is even with the dome.
- a) Grind a very slight reverse bevel on the girdle. This is necessary to remove the sharp edge of the stone.
- a) Hand-sand the back with the 220 grit sandpaper, laying the paper on a flat surface. Also, go over the reverse bevel lightly.

17



angled side view,
top dop

mixed view,
stone flat on disc



side views, stone w/guides & reverse bevel

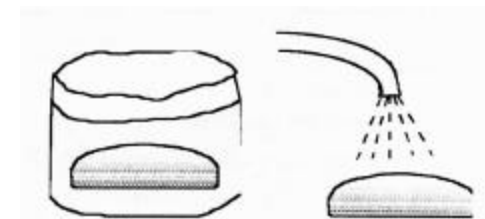


mixed view, sandpaper w/dop

18. Remove the dop

- 1) As before in Step 16.
- 2) Soak the stone in fingernail polish remover or alcohol for a few minutes to remove all traces of dopping wax.

18



mixed view, soak

side view, rinse

19. Enjoy your opal

19

