

The Opal Express

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



Member

Member



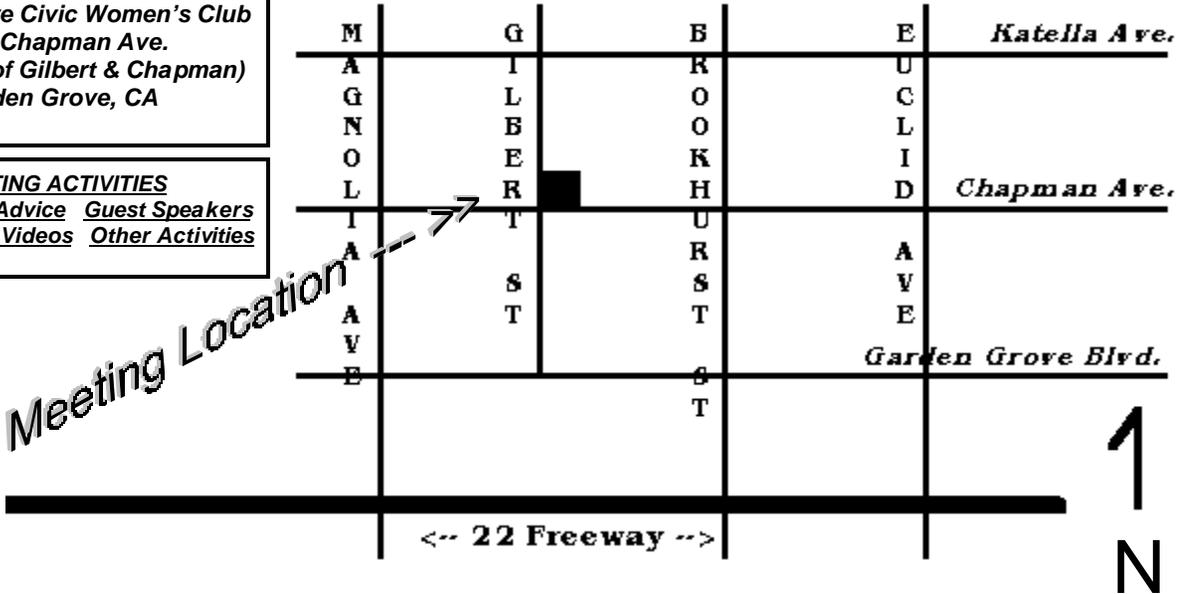
Volume #31 Issue #07 July 1999



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



American Opal Society Officers

Carol Bova	President	(818) 845-8610	email bova@bovagems.com
Mike Kowalsky	Vice Pres.	(714) 761-4876	email mykowalsky@aol.com
Alan Farquer	Treasurer	(714) 537-0556	email nnf@earthlink.net
Jim Pisani	Secretary	(562) 948-6374	email vulajim@gte.net
Russ Madsen	Editor	(562) 425-9788	email 76550.1366@compuserve.com

AUSTRALIAN OPAL AT ITS BEST

By Barb Whyre

Each Opal Express in the following months will present an account of discovery as researched by Barbara Moritz, Secretary of the Lightning Ridge Historical Society, in her efforts to unravel the early history of the black opal fields in New South Wales, Australia. Should you have constructive information, please email: barbeemitz@yahoo.com or Write Box 1, L/Ridge 2834.

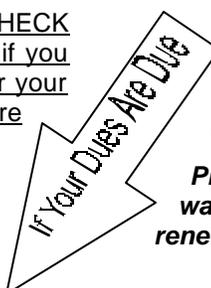
Part 1

"Fire Queen", reported by the Sydney Mail in January 1930 to be worth 40,000 pounds, was found by Charlie Dunstan before 1910 at the Angledool Diggings, Lightning Ridge, and sold by him to a buyer for a mere 100 pd. The gem changed hands several times before it left Australia enroute to the Paris Exhibition in the 1920s, and could not be bought for 1000 pd.!

An American collector presented "Fire Queen" to a museum in Chicago. Nearly 60 years on, is this precious opal still in the Field Museum? Very early Australian opal, fully documented, is to be seen around the world in such collections and this history can be retrieved with perseverance. Can you help us?

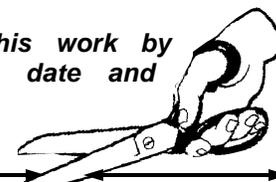
Are Your Dues Due Now? PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL or the membership roster if you are listed. If your label shows the current month/year your dues are DUE NOW. If the date is older, your dues are overdue.

Renewal Grace Period of two months will be 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 watching your expiration date and renewing promptly. Thanks!



DUES RENEWAL FORM

(membership renewal form rev. 1/1/98) d:\ameropal\news\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
(addresses in Los Angeles, Orange, & Riverside counties)
- 2) CALIFORNIA & USA \$20.00
(all addresses outside local area counties)
- 3) FOREIGN \$30.00
(all addresses outside USA)

** \$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: _____

COUNTRY (IF OUTSIDE U.S.) _____

TELEPHONE: Home (_____) _____ : Business (_____) _____

FAX (_____) _____

Please indicate any name or mailing address changes

NAME BADGE ORDER FORM: (OPTIONAL)

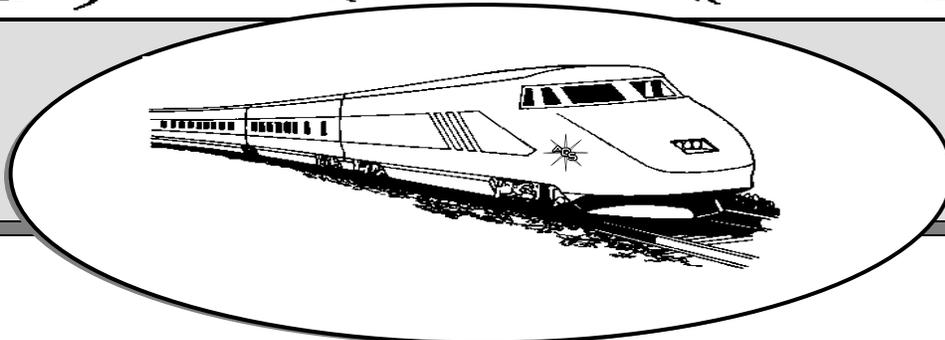
Number of badges ordered _____
(\$5.00 EACH - includes engraving)
PLEASE PRINT NAME AS YOU WISH IT TO APPEAR ON YOUR BADGE using up to two (2) lines of text for your name, nickname or name of your opal related business.

The Opal Express

JULY 1999

Published monthly by the American Opal Society

Volume 31, Issue 7



President's Message from Carol Bova

President's Message

It's summer, and you want to spend your free time admiring or cutting opal, so I'm going to be very brief!

Last month, **Bill Burns** spoke on Virgin Valley opal and we had a great time! Bill and his wife Isabella have a great slide show and talk with incredible specimens on display too. The program really gave a good idea of what it is like to actually collect at Virgin Valley, and the excitement of finding some outstanding pieces of opal. If you have a chance to catch one of Bill's programs, please do! **Thank you, Bill & Isabella!!**

Cliff and Eva Coan pleasantly surprised us by wearing their original Opal Society badges.... a great reminder that when you come to meetings, wear your badge! It's so much easier to keep names and faces together when there's a name badge reminding you!

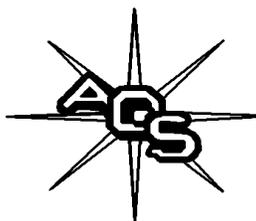
Time to start finishing up the dealer arrangements for the November show. Do you have an opal or gem dealer you'd like us to invite to participate? Call, write or email a board member as soon as possible!

(Member dealers: If you haven't made contact yet, please let us know right away how many table spaces to hold for you!)

***** SHOW SUPPORT

Time too to start collecting names of volunteers to work on the show! Two areas of Show Support where volunteers are needed are:

REGISTRATION TABLES: Volunteers collect admission fees for the show and symposia, stamp parking validations, have folks fill in door prize tickets, sell raffle tickets and I Love Opal badges and discuss the American Opal Society with prospective members.



DATES TO REMEMBER

General Meeting
Thurs July 8th 7PM

Director's Meeting
Monday July 5

AOS
Opal & Gem Show
November 6 - 7
Anaheim, CA

(Continued on page 3)



Work Shop Information...

The NEW LOCATION for the Opal Society workshop is now available! It is the lapidary classroom at Walker Jr High School, 8132 Walker St., La Palma, CA 90623

Directions: (Choice of 3 Freeway approaches)

- [1] Exit the 605 at Carson St and proceed east, or
- [2] exit the 5 or 91 Fwy at Valley View and proceed south, or
- [3] exit the 22/405 Freeways at Valley View and proceed north.

Walker Jr HS is on Walker St north of Lincoln Ave. It is on the east side of Walker between Crescent Ave. and La Palma Ave. Drive to the far back of the school to the Lapidary Arts classroom.

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. ☼

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Dues Renewal	1	Itemization - Insurance, Shop News, July Guest Speaker, Opal Show, Silver	4	Help Wanted - Club Duties	6	Primitive Jewelry (casting)	7
Australian Opal At Its Best - pt 1	2			Aust. Opal At Its Best - pt 2	6	Field Trips & Internet	7
Book Review - Discover Opals	3	Workshop Info	5	What's Happening?	6		

President's Message (con't)

Ideally, there will be 3 people at the tables for 2-4 hour shifts as your time permits. Think ahead about whether you prefer to help on Saturday or Sunday, morning or afternoons.

SHOW SETUP: helping run the electrical cords and tape them down, making sure the hotel puts the same height tables together and puts them in the proper location, bringing the show materials to the hotel and getting them in the right places. After the show, reversing the process! Time slots would be Friday evening, Saturday morning and Sunday after the show.

Let a board member know of your interest by phone, mail, email or sign-up board at meetings!

WORKSHOP AT WALKER JR. HIGH: We're ready to roll! Call Stan McCall to reserve your workshop time Monday or Wednesday evenings. Members only, \$3.00 lab fee per session.

Thanks to **Len Toelk** for this month's Book Review. We look forward to future reviews from Len, and welcome submissions from our members everywhere!

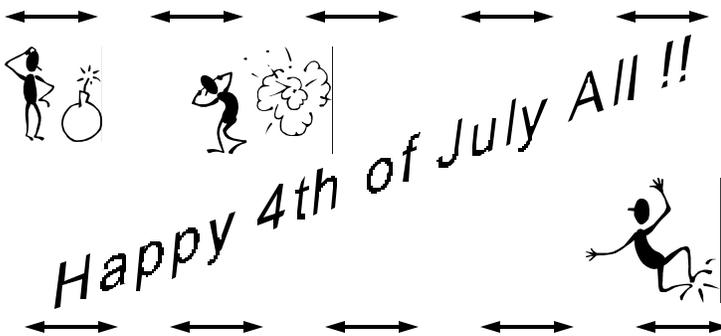
And for the internet active....

go check out our AOS website at:

<http://opalsociety.hypermart.net/>

Now go enjoy some opal!

Carol



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. ❁

BOOK review

By Len Toelk

DISCOVER OPALS WITH SURFACE INDICATIONS

by STEPHEN ARACIC

DISCOVER OPALS - BEFORE AND BEYOND 2000 - with SURFACE INDICATIONS is one of the most informative and useful books that I have ever read about opals, and I have read most of them. Stephen Aracic set out to write a book that would help people find opals and this book will definitely be a great asset to those who actually go out to the fields or just go on armchair opal safaris.

The book contains 352 pages and over 400 beautiful color photos of opals, color diagrams and maps, along with color photos of surface and underground features. There are long chapters in the book about past and present day Coober Pedy, White Cliffs, Andamooka and Lightning Ridge, and a few pages about almost every smaller opal mining area I have ever read about. Stephen has been an opal miner all over Australia for over 30 years and his photos cover everything from surface tree lines, sandstone "blows" and fault lines to underground levels, slips, slides and support techniques. My favorites are those showing what opal levels and nut bands really look like to miners on different fields, and he has photos from almost all of them. The techniques and clues that Stephen employs can save you a great deal of time and money exploring unfavorable areas. As Len Cram said recently, "A great deal of information."

Stephen has included worthwhile information on subjects that include costs, legal requirements, local customs, safety, and even optionally diving for fault lines where no trees or other surface indications are present. If you are heading for the fields to do some fossicking, mining or both, this is the ONE book I consider a "must" to read beforehand and then take with you.

The book is limited to 1500 copies and is available on the Internet or by mail from Stephen Aracic, P.O. Box 143, Lightning Ridge NSW 2834 Australia. The price via Air Mail has been U.S. \$99.00. Contact Stephen Aracic for more information. ❁

(Len Toelk is a part-time dealer in and collector of books about opals, gems and jewelry. Until he discovers the opal level in Brooklyn, Len will remain a full-time computer consultant.)



PLEASE NOTE!!! The American Opal Society assumes no responsibility for injury or damage due to accidents or carelessness. Members and guests assume all risks during club activities.

The Opal Express is published monthly by
The American Opal Society.
Copyright 1999. All rights reserved.
NON-COMMERCIAL REPRINT PERMISSION GRANTED
UNLESS OTHERWISE RESERVED
Editor---Russ Madsen
Please address all inquiries to:
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)

ITEMIZATION

ITEM: CFMS insurance issue...have not yet heard anything clarifying the concerns of a variety of clubs regarding field trip insurance. When the AOS joined the CFMS one of the deciding factors was the available insurance for club shows. Recently **Harold Andersen** attended the Federation show in Turlock. We are looking forward to an update on whether the CFMS insurance extends to field trips.

Our questions: what exactly is covered? Can we get a copy of the policy to review or have reviewed on our behalf? Why is communication so poor?

Allen Farquer contacted the Sierra Club to inquire about their group insurance since they have field trips, and he should be getting a copy of their policy. ✿

ITEM: Guest Speaker for June, **Bill Burns**, noted he was an AOS member many years ago. Great to have you share your love of opal with the club again Bill. ✿

ITEM: Badges...(2 items) (some good news and some not so good news).

First the good news: on the subject of long time AOS members, **Cliff and Eva Coan** were wearing their original Opal Society badges at the June meeting!!!

And the not so good news: we have about 6 members still patiently waiting for badges for which they have paid. We are trying to find a member willing to take over the responsibility for badges, but no one has stepped forward as yet. We appreciate your continued patience. ✿

ITEM: Workshop open now... **Wes Roth** talked to the principal at Walker and the custodian will be opening for us on Mondays and Wednesdays at 6:30pm. We start paying 6/18, so the missed nights up til now at least didn't cost us anything. ✿

ITEM: Through **Mike Kowalsky's** efforts several AOS members attended the June 23rd meeting of LA Natural History Museum Gem & Mineral Council. It was an opportunity to learn what type of presentation is typically given. We learned this is a fine group of folks - gem lovers who can be described as well above average; our visit showed the quality of the Council as many perceptive and penetrating questions were posed to the guest speakers.

This visit was made with a view to giving an opal presentation in September or October to the Council. We now know it will be a good time to pull out the stops and share our best opal knowledge as well as some of the fine opal in AOS member collections. ✿

ITEM: July Guest Speaker We're hoping to enjoy a presentation by **Clare Gagnon** on working with wire: wrapping, weaving, etc at our July meeting. Date is the second Thursday – July 8 – 7 PM at the regular location – Garden Grove Civic Women's Club. Corner of Gilbert and Chapman, Garden Grove. ✿

ITEM: Opal Show Nov 6th-7th: we have confirmations or indications from 12 dealers for sure. We're exploring a few new areas such as tools (KH Lee or Walblom), Rock of Ages for books. If you have any other ideas for non-opal booths, let us know! ✿

ITEM: SILVER if gold was the metal of royalty in historical times, silver did not go unnoticed and unappreciated. Granted, silver tarnishes and will corrode, but it is still a precious metal.

The ancients knew and valued silver as long ago as four thousand years before Christ. For a time, according to historians, it was even more precious than gold. The Greeks used silver for jewelry and to make battle shields, while the Romans were among the first to use it for money. The Scottish highlanders were particularly fond of silver. During the times of the clan wars and the wars with England, no Scot went into battle without a silver ornament. The ornament was usually a brooch or pin, often set with stones or gems, and was used to fasten the plaid or shawl that was a part of their native dress. It was also a good luck charm, but if the Scot had the bad luck to be killed, the silver ornament was insurance that the warrior would have a decent burial, with the person burying the body expected to do so in exchange for the ornament.

Pure silver, like pure gold, is 99.99 percent silver. Like gold, too, it is too soft in itself to be worked unless it is alloyed with another metal, usually copper. Unlike gold, it does not require as much of a base metal to be worked. Again, unlike gold, silver standards are worldwide, in addition, in the United States, Great Britain and the Commonwealth, and other countries, both the quality of the silver and the hallmark (or trademark or name) of the manufacturer must appear on the item.

Fine silver is *sterling* silver. Sterling silver is 92.5 percent silver and 7.5 percent copper. Silver alloys, therefore, have a lower percentage of base metals and a higher percentage of silver than karat gold, making it more apt to be scratched or gauged than gold. It may be marked "sterling", "92.5 fine", or ".925".

The term "sterling" goes back to the fourteenth century and England's King John, who imported Germans to refine silver to a certain standard for use as coins. The Germans came from the east and were called "Easterlings". As a result, the money came to be called "easterling", which was later shortened to "esterling" and finally to "sterling". In fact, in 1300 King John ordered that all silver had to be of "esterling allay",

(Continued on page 5)

SILVER (Continued from page 4)

thus establishing England's sterling standard for money.

The other kind of silver you may find in jewelry is coin silver. *Coin silver* is 90 percent silver and 10 percent other metal. It may be marked "coin", "coin silver", or "900".

The term "coin silver" comes from the fact that coin silver was literally the silver used for coins. After King John established the sterling standard, all silver technically had to meet the same standard, but if silver was popular for decorative purposes, that meant there was less available for coins. During the Middle Ages, silver for ornamentation fell out of favor except in monasteries. The Renaissance brought a rebirth of the love for it, starting in Italy and France and spreading to England. The appetite was fed later on by the enormous discoveries in the New World, and the Old World could not get enough.

Even so, there was not enough go around. During the seventeenth-century reign of Charles II in England, for example, silver was so popular that silversmiths resorted to melting down coins to meet the demand. As a result, the mint ran short of coinage despite all the pleas and efforts to get silver turned in to the mint instead of to the smiths. To prevent use of coin silver, the amount of silver required for articles such as jewelry, candlesticks, silverware, and other decorative items was raised, while the amount in coins remained the same. Since all items had to be assayed for silver content before being sold, cheating could be detected and the penalties for using the lesser quality were severe.

Coin silver regained popularity during the Victorian period, especially for elaborately initialed link bracelets. In the United States, Indian jewelry made much use of coins until 1890, when laws were passed making their use in jewelry illegal.

The disadvantage of silver jewelry, aside from being subject to scratching and gouging, is that it tarnishes unless it is worn regularly. As a result, some manufacturers in the United States coat or plate the silver with rhodium, an element of platinum. Rhodium plating does not affect the quality or standard, and it insures a bright silvery finish that does not tarnish. ❄

Ref. – **Jewelry** by Edythe Cudlipp.



Workshop schedule

Be sure to check here for workshop schedule updates. The dates listed below are those available to the AOS in our NEW WORKSHOP AT WALKER Jr HIGH SCHOOL. The shop can be opened to members on Monday and Wednesday nights. **Please continue to contact Stan McCall by calling him at Gems & Opals (714) 827-5680 if you plan to attend a shop session.**

July 1999

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	31

= Available Workshop dates = General Meeting date

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 fees: effective immediately...
SHOP USAGE FEE IS \$3 PER SESSION.
- 5) 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.

HELP WANTED

PLEASE READ – YOUR CLUB NEEDS YOU

The positions listed below are presently open and we are seeking volunteers to fill them. Please see what you can do for your club!

1) PROGRAM CHAIR

-this position involves making contact with and scheduling guest speakers and preparing a short article for the newsletter describing upcoming events.

2) MEMBERSHIP BADGE COORDINATOR

-this position involves taking blank badges to the engraver and mailing finished badges when ready.

3) REFRESHMENTS CHAIR

-arrange for or bring refreshments to monthly meetings. Costs are reimbursed by the club.

4) DOOR PRIZE CHAIR

-this is a new position and will involve arranging for door prizes donated by members which may be raffled or given away to those in attendance at monthly meetings.

5) WOODWORKER / CARPENTER

-this position will involve construction of new show cases for club opal displays to be shown at a variety of locations primarily other club shows.

6) SAFETY CHAIR

-this position involves preparing a short newsletter article regarding safe practices as a club member during workshop activities, field trips, club meetings etc.

7) HISTORIAN

-this position involves bringing the club history written by John Hall up to the present

PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE, if you are skilled in any of the above we NEED your help. If you are not skilled and have a big heart – volunteer anyway, we'll figure something out! A number of people have been doing significantly more than their fair share of the work to the benefit of all members of the club. Let's see if we can even that burden out a bit.

TO VOLUNTEER: Please contact any board member at meetings or by phone, or email.

AUSTRALIAN OPAL AT ITS BEST - Part 2

By Barb Whyre

In 1908, Charlie Dunstan found "**Queen of the Earth**", also known as "Dunstan's Stone" at the Angledool Diggings, Lightning Ridge. She weighed in at about 6 oz, or nearly 900 carats - one account says 1100 ct. Which ever, she was the largest nobby to date, alive with all the colors, "truly a marvelous gem; too beautiful for words!"

Leechman (1961) reports that the "**Queen**" was valued at a quarter of a million U.S. dollars in her natural state in the 1930s and that Dunstan had gotten but 100 pounds for her from an unknown buyer. Idriess (1940) confirms the former.

Another story is that Charlie took the "**Queen**" to Angledool town to show her off. In his carefree mood, he drank too much, fell off his perch and when he awoke, the "**Queen**" was gone! The story goes, when she resurfaced, she had been sold for a mere 100 pd., then resold to J. D. Rockefeller for 75,000 pd., who donated her to their prestigious collection in the 1940s.

By then, poor old Charlie was long gone. He is the first recorded suicide on the Lightning Ridge Opalfields. He shot himself down his mine; some say he died in the horrors, 1910.

Today, the feelers are out to locate "**Queen of the Earth**". The Gemological Institute of America is currently researching any and all opals that fit the description and approximate date. ❄

Each Opal Express presents an account of discovery as researched by Barbara Moritz, Secretary of the Ridge Historical Society, in her efforts to unravel the early history of the black opalfields in New South Wales, Australia. Should you have constructive information, please email: barbeemitz@yahoo.com or write to Box 1, L/Ridge 2834.



What's

Calendar of Upcoming Events Dates /

Jul 10 10AM-6PM Jul 11 10A-5PM Culver City Rock & Min Club, Veterans Mem'l Auditorium, Overland Ave at Culver Blvd, Culver City, CA

Jul 31 10AM-6PM Aug 1 10AM-5PM San Francisco Gem & Min Soc, Golden Gate Park,

Aug 20 – 21 10AM-6PM Aug 22 10AM-4PM Expo Center, Rocherty Rd at Route 72 Boeing Rec Cntr,

f Nov 6 – 7 Opal & Gem Show, American Opal Society, Quality Hotel, 616 Convention Way, Anaheim, CA

Primitive Jewelry Making

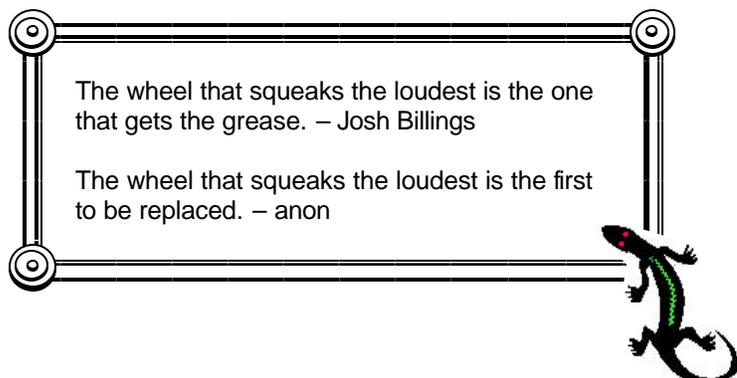
I found this article on the Internet website Ganoksin Online <http://www.ganoksin.com>

It seems to be right in line with our May program on Africa. I am taking it word for word from Peter Rowe's on line answer to another's query about primitive casting methods.

'Another low tech casting method that would amaze you with it's simplicity and the sophistication of it's results is the methods used in West Africa for casting gold, bronze, etc. The models are often just beeswax, collected directly from the bees. Rolled into very thin wax wires, and tiny balls, these things are then coiled into the most delicate and beautiful forms. After the models are made, and sprued, they get 'invested" in a mix of plain old clay, and organic matter like dried grass, etc. (The initial coat over the model is fine clay, no straw). Then it is formed, with successive layers to form a mold, and the end of the sprue is built up into a crucible shape as well. After the clay has thoroughly dried, this thing is placed in a fire (charcoal) and the wax burned out. It's cooled slowly, and the casting metal is placed in that open crucible shape, and more clay is then built up over it to close the cavity. You end up with a dumbbell shape, one end of which is a hollow cavity with the casting metal enclosed, and the other end is the model cavity, the two connected by a sprue.

Sounds complicated, but do keep in mind that so far, all the casting materials are dug either from a beehive, or from the ground, except perhaps the metal, and that too I guess.. Anyway, now that this thing, after again drying the clay, is placed again in the fire, this time with the metal containing end down. The straw/organic content of the clay makes the mold porous enough to allow fumes to exit, as well as providing a nice reducing atmosphere for the melting metal. When the metal is melted, judged by the color of fumes and flames surrounding the mold, the whole dumbbell is simply inverted. The molten metal runs down into the mold area by gravity alone. A look through any text showing the historical Ashante cast gold and bronze work will demonstrate just how well this technique works. The reducing nature of the mold keeps metal cleaner than our normal investing procedures, and the high metal and mold temps allow a complete fill even with fine sprues and very delicate filigree models. Some of these things would be a real challenge to cast consistently using our normal methods. ❁

(from The Rockorder May 1999)



ON COOPERATION, FIELD TRIPS AND INTERNET

by Teresa Masters
San Diego Council Internet Liaison

During September, the Palomar Gem and Mineral Club was Host to a San Diego County Council sponsored Field Trip to Topaz Mountain Utah.

This week-long trip was led by Marie and Chris Leslie, and sixteen plus persons participated. I say plus, as this trip was posted on the Internet, and we were joined by others.

One day, two carloads of Italians from Milan came into camp and onto Topaz Mountain for the Sherry colored Topaz. They were quite successful and very happy. We all were.

The cooperation begins with San Diego County Council. This is comprised of a representative from each of 13 local area clubs. To ensure that there is a good field trip at least once a month, each club takes a month and plans an outstanding held trip. This works very well, and relieves each club of having to find a trip a month.

Cooperation continues via the Internet. Merit Leslie and I both posted requests for information, and personal collecting experiences others were willing to share. We both received many responses and suggestions. Walter Mroch just recently co-authored a new book on Utah and Marie arranged to buy this from him. Walter very generously included additional copies of the maps from the book. This was really helpful. We also were directed to a dealer in Delta – Loy Crapo - who hand-drew us maps and gave us permission to dig at his claims.

Being willing to share is the most important part of cooperation. Internet is still a mystery to many people. This is unfortunate, as it is an incredible window on life. There is a fear that information shared on Internet will lead to mass invasion of areas divulged, and a request for secrecy was plead.

This is an issue we all have been affected by, one way or another. Many great locations have gone to the grave with the finder. There is a strong feeling, that if the word gets out, the area will be picked clean, and nothing will be left. Yes, there are those among us who have denuded areas...hopefully, not too many. Most of the Rockhounds I have come to know and love, share willingly. Yes, on the next visit, the float may be gone but walk a bit, and dig a bit. You will be rewarded.

I have been collecting shared stories of field trips taken by many Internet users. There is a large file, and I add to it regularly. The personal stories are wonderful. Some of these will lead to field trips offered via CFMS and member clubs. For the coming year, I am working on Crystal Hill, Montana, with the Italians, and a no-host return to Topaz Mountain. These will appear in local newsletters as well as on the Internet.

Our collecting areas are opening up, not shutting down. Trips will be posted far enough in advance that vacations can be scheduled to accommodate them. Fear not the Internet; it can lead to the experiences of a lifetime. ❁

(from CFMS Newsletter 12/98)