

The Opal Express

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



Member

Member



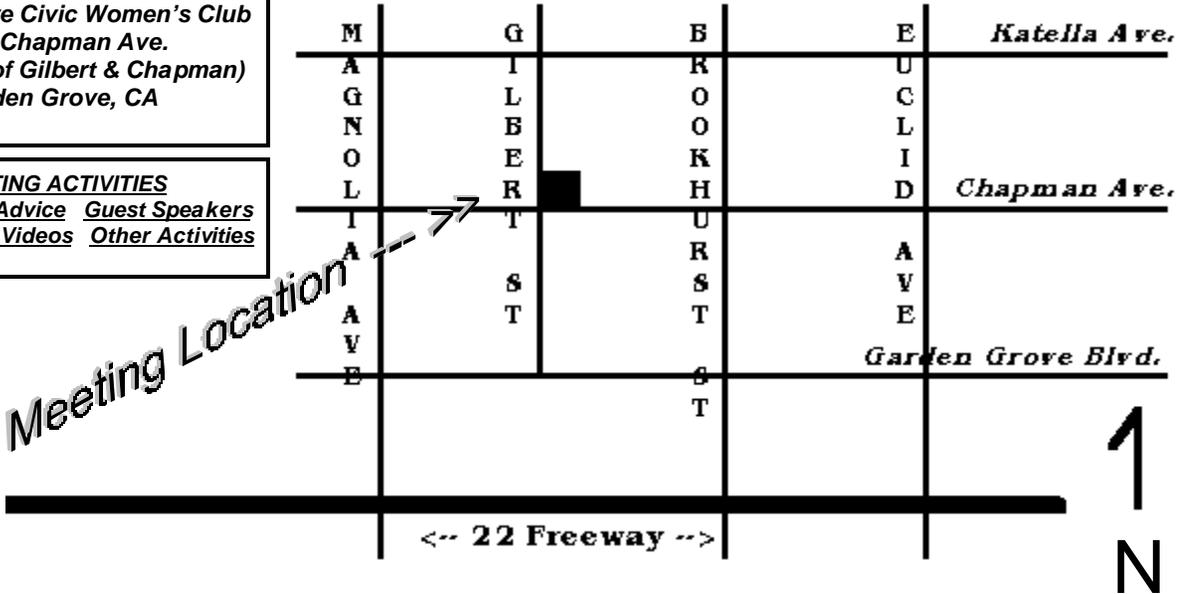
Volume #32 Issue #09 September 2000

**General meeting Thursday
 September 14 7PM**

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) 951-1402	email bova@bovagems.com
Mike Kowalsky	Vice Pres.	(714) 761-4876	email mykowsky@aol.com
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American Opal Society website		http://www.opalsociety.org	

by Cathy

THE ANGLE OF REPOSE

No, the angle of repose has nothing to do with taking a nap (although sometimes a nap is a good safety precaution too!). The angle of repose is a geological term referring to the slope of earth materials at rest. We need to understand it in order to avoid landslides and avalanches.

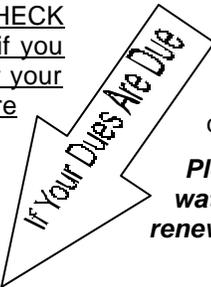
A pile of material such as sand, dirt or gravel will always have the same angle of repose as a pile of similar composition. The degree of the angle is fixed for each material. Larger, irregular or wet materials (except snow) have a steeper angle, up to about 40 degrees, while sand maintains an angle of about 25 degrees, and clay, with its even finer particles, would be at rest at even less of an angle. You can demonstrate this at home even if you don't have any sand or gravel; compare mounds of sugar and rice. You can not increase the angle and still maintain stability no matter how hard you try.

Probably most of us do not have to worry too much about avalanches, but snow pack works much the same way. Dry snow has a higher angle of repose and the angle can be much higher the colder the temperature. Other factors such as centrifugal forces and wall friction also come into play, but when snow starts to melt, increasing the moisture content, the angle decreases and the snow will eventually start to move.

As long as the dirt or snow is at the angle of repose, it is not a threat to our safety, but as conditions change, warmer weather, rain or disturbing the environment by walking, digging or earthquakes, the material is not likely to remain stable. Mixed sand, gravel, etc. may fall into several angles of repose depending on which particles are dominant in any strata, which makes them particularly unpredictable. Knowing how these materials may shift can help you establish a position of safety if working in this kind of environment. Just remember that the earth will do whatever it can to reestablish the angle of repose, the slope at which it feels "comfortable" and equilibrium is possible. ☼

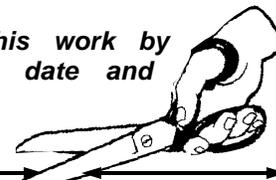
Are Your Dues Due Now? PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL or the membership roster if you are listed. If your label shows the current month/year your dues are DUE NOW. If the date is older, your dues are **OVERDUE**.

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\tr\forms\dues_due.pub



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

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: _____

COUNTRY (IF OUTSIDE U.S.) _____ TELEPHONE: Home (_____) _____

Business (_____) _____ FAX (_____) _____

Email: _____

Please indicate any name or mailing address changes

NAME BADGE ORDER FORM: (OPTIONAL)

Number of badges ordered _____
(\$5.00 EACH - includes engraving)

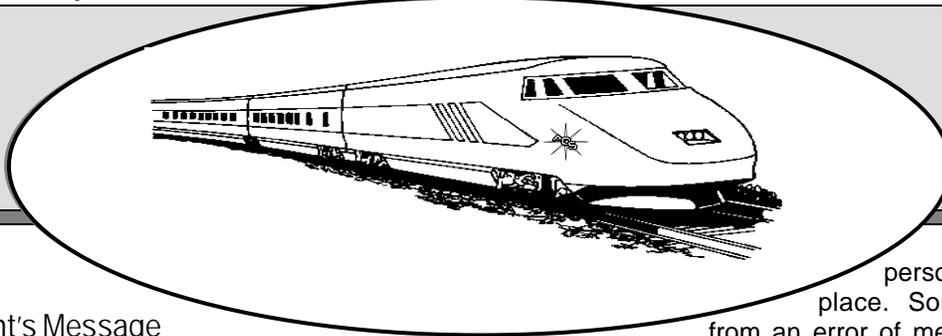
PLEASE PRINT NAME AS YOU WISH IT TO APPEAR ON YOUR BADGE using up to two (2) lines of text for your name, nickname or name of your opal related business.

The Opal Express

ISSUE 9
VOLUME 32

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President's Message

from Carol Bova

Thank You, Mr. Jones!

And thank you to Russ Madsen and Len Toelk for sharing their knowledge with Rock and Gem! In a recent publication of R&G, some factual missatements slipped into an article about opal. Len and Russ both wrote to point out the facts and better ways to express some of the scientific info. In the October, 2000 Rock & Gem, Bob Jones wrote a nice piece on color phenomena in opal, and cleared up the earlier glitches. While it's always great to read articles on opal, it's much better when they're accurate! And that leads to my next segment:

Water Your Lawn and Feed Your Dog, Not Your Opals!

From time to time, I read 'advice' on the internet on the Care and Feeding of Opals. I won't go into all the suggestions, but some of the most recurrent are needing to keep opals in water so they keep their color. Hydrophane and precious white base or black opals are talked about as if they were the same. Unstable Virgin Valley that hasn't been treated by David Lippman or Bob Halahan may not be able to withstand the stress of drying out, and might be better kept as a specimen, but there are some pieces that can dry to a stable, cuttable condition, and sure don't need to be watered at that point!

Can't say as I ever met a hungry opal, but I have encountered suggestions on 'feeding' them, none that I care to repeat here!

What can we do when we run into errors and misconceptions? Check out anything that sounds strange or is new to you. If you find out, or know it's incorrect, gently offer the info to the

person sending the bad info in the first place. Sometimes, it's an honest mistake, from an error of memory, or from fatigue, or a simple case of fingers typing faster than their owners are thinking (things I've been guilty of myself!).

Share the names and authors of your favorite opal books and tapes. Spread the word and share your knowledge and love of opal. Refer interested people to our website, or give them our P.O. box number. Wear opal, show opal, talk opal! You'll enjoy doing it, and you just might bring another opal-lover into the Society!

'Til next month,
Carol

PS Time to pick your volunteer time slot for the Opal Show in November. See me at the meeting to sign up! ☼



DATES TO REMEMBER

General Mtg
Thurs Sept. 14 7PM

Board of Directors
Mtg
Mon Sept 11 7PM

AOS Opal & Gem Show
Nov 4th & 5th, 2000

Work Shop Information...

The LOCATION for the Opal Society workshop 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. ☼

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Suiseki

Our speaker in March was Toy Sato who presented an enlightening program on *suiseki*. If you're like me, you thought this term referred to a found rock of any size, shape or color that could be considered a natural sculpture because of its beauty. Not so.

The term *suiseki* (soo-ee-'seck-ee) comes from the words *sui*, for water, and *seki*, meaning stone. It refers specifically to water tumbled rocks that are small enough to be picked up in one hand, weigh not more than 10 pounds, are dark in color and quite hard, resemble landscapes or animals and - most importantly - are strictly natural: they have not been cut, polished, oiled or even washed!

Toy calls *suiseki* "nature in miniature." Foot-high, natural sculptures of bright-colored alabaster or amethyst may be very attractive, but they're not *suiseki*; they are more correctly termed *biseki* ('bee seck-ee) or "beautiful stone."

80% of Japan is mountainous with innumerable rivers and streams by which an infinite number of rocks are tumbled. The action of water on stone is very abrasive and most river-tumbled rocks are rounded and smooth so true *suiseki* are actually quite rare.

Suiseki fall into several specific categories according to shape, including plateaus, mountains, mountain lakes, islands, waterfalls, step stones, puddle stones, arches, thatched roof houses, and figure stones (resembling people or animals). Each type should conform to certain rules. For instance, waterfall *suiseki* must have a lighter-colored vein running down only the front side of the stone; after all, a real waterfall never descends two sides of the same peak.

There are also rules for displaying *suiseki*. You might make a stand out of wood but instead of flattening the base of the stone to keep it from rocking, you must carve the wood to conform to the shape of the stone's natural, bottom surface.

You might also place your *suiseki* in a shallow, dark tray filled with sand -just be sure its highest side is closer to the edge of the tray than the lowest; and the tray itself should be about 1 1/2 times bigger than the stone. If the *suiseki* is an island or puddle stone, you would also pour water over it as it sits in its tray of sand.

In any case, it is most important that the display not overshadow the object itself, which must remain the focal point. The idea is to meditate on the *suiseki* until you become as small as a grain of sand and a part of the scene before you. Thank you, Toy, for your inspirational program! ❁

(from The Nugget 04/00)



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. ❁

ITEMIZATION

ITEM: NEW PO BOX REMINDER our new PO Box is open for mailings — American Opal Society, Inc., P.O. Box 4875, Garden Grove, CA 92842-4875. Once again, we are keeping the former box for a few months, too. ❁

ITEM: *Anglic Gemcutter*: while the *Opal Express* has enjoyed a reciprocal relationship with *Anglic Gemcutter* for some time now, we are sorry to report that a recent fire at *Anglic Gemcutter* of-fices has forced them to cease publication. ❁

ITEM: *humor snippets from the Internet...*

He who laughs last, thinks slowest.

Everyone has a photographic memory.

Some don't have film.

A day without sunshine is like, well, night.

On the other hand, you have different fingers.

Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.

I just got lost in thought. It was unfamiliar territory.

When the chips are down, the buffalo is empty.

Seen it all, done it all, can't remember most of it. ❁

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Editor---Russ Madsen

Please address all inquiries to:

The Opal Express,

P.O. Box 4875, Garden Grove, CA 92842-4875

E-mail 76550.1366@compuserve.com

(Deadline for items: 15th of the month prior to each issue)



Tip Sheets for cutting Boulder Opal

provided by Tim and Barbara Thomas.

We conclude with Pages 5 & 6 (excerpted). Our thanks to Tim and Barbara for permission to reprint this series of helpful guides to handling and cutting boulder opal.

STEP 4 SHAPING AND POLISHING THE STONE

1. **After sawing the stone, shape** the sides and back of the stone using silicon carbide wheels or diamond 100 - 220 grit.
2. **The faced piece** can now be prepolished and finished.
Some cautions
 - the opal may be very thin
 - the faced piece may have a very rough surface
 - be very cautious about overheating the stone
3. Use a stationary hand piece (up to 20,000 rpm) with 500 mesh sand paper mounted on soft rubber backings. It's best to have more than one of these ready to use because a rough face of opal may use 1-10 discs, depending upon the size and complexity of the piece. Use a dust collection system or a mask as this process is done dry. Gently, gently, gently, touch the opal to the moving disc for 1-2-3 seconds, or less, check the stone by rubbing your thumb or finger over the stone and check for fire patterns, roughness and heat. In this manner remove rough edges of the opal. Follow the contours of the fire patterns. Look at the stone every **2-3 seconds!! --when you sand away fire it is gone forever!!!!!!**
4. Proceed to the next sanding step **after** you have **wiped** off the debris and 500 mesh material from the stone.
5. Using 800 mesh sandpaper on the soft rubber backings -- go through the same process as described above. When satisfied that all the 500 scratches are gone (use magnification to check this out) proceed to final polish.
6. Final polish the faced opal on a leather buff using wet cerium oxide.
7. Finish the back and sides of the stone using 500, then 800 but use chrome oxide instead of the cerium as it seems to do a better job on the sandstone or ironstone.

Note:

You can make your own discs to mount on the mandrel. Buy sheets of 500 and 800 mesh sheets at any hardware store and punch out multiple discs with disc cutters that can be bought at Harbor Freight on sale. Use appropriate glue like "lapidary disc cement" ✪

What's happening???

Calendar of Upcoming Events Dates and Locations of Shows

Sept 16 10AM-6PM Sept 17 10AM-5PM Santa Lucia Rockhounds, Pioneer Park & Museum,

Sept 16-17 10AM-5PM Sequoia Gem & Min Society, Redwood City Recreation Dept., Community Activities Bldg., 1400 Roosevelt Ave.,

Sept 23 10AM-6PM Sept 24 10AM-5PM Carmel Valley Gem & Min Society, Monterey Fairgrounds, 204 Fairgrounds Rd., Monterey, CA

Sept 23 10AM-6PM Sept 24 10AM-4PM Delvers Gem & Min Society, Women's Club of Downey,

Sept 30 Oct 1 10AM-5PM Vista Gem & Min Society, Bregles Terrace Community Recreation

Oct 4 - 15 Fri & Sat 10AM-11PM, other days 10AM-10PM Fresno Gem & Min Society, Fresno County Fair, Fresno County Fairgrounds, 1121 Chance Ave., Fresno, CA

Oct 14 8AM-5PM Oct 15 8AM-4PM Searles Lake Gem & Min Society, Trona Lapidary & Show Bldg., 13337 Main St, Trona, CA

Oct 9 - 10 9AM-5PM Victor Valley Gem & Min Club, San Bernardino County Fairgrounds, 14800

✻ **Nov 4 10AM-7PM Nov 5 10AM-4PM** ✻

AOS Opal & Gem Show

**Quality Hotel 616 Convention Way,
Anaheim, CA**

you will never be poor as long as you have hope.

- Donald Trump

Workshop schedule

Be sure to check here for workshop schedule updates. The dates listed below are those available to the AOS in our WORKSHOP AT WALKER Jr HIGH SCHOOL. The shop can be opened to members on 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.**

September 2000

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

October 2000

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

Please see calendar above 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.