

The Opal Express

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



**Volume #35 Issue #10
 October 2002**

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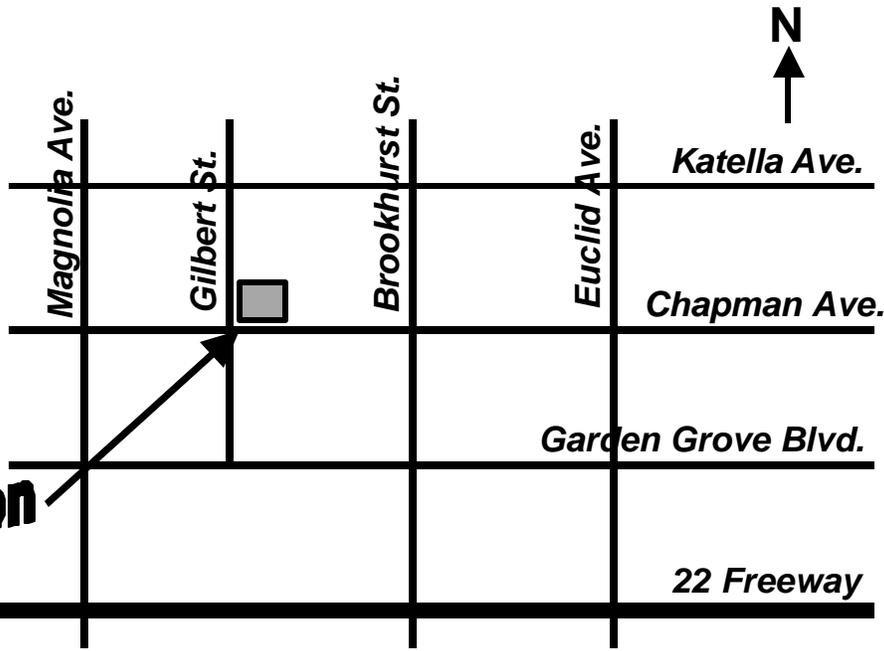
TO:

**Board Meeting: Oct. 7
 General Meeting
 Thursday, Oct. 10**

— 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



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

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Jim Pisani	Editor & Webmaster	(562) 797-5239	email: webmaster@opalsociety.org



American Opal Society Membership Renewal

Thank you for continuing to support your American Opal Society!

TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP (Select one)	DUES / RATES (select one)**	AMOUNT PAID
1) All US Addresses including Alaska and Hawaii	\$25.00	
2) International Members = All addresses outside of US Addresses	\$30.00	
3) Additional Badges/each	\$5.00	
** SENIOR DISCOUNT = Age 65 or over deduct \$5.00	-\$5.00	
Name badge (optional) \$5.00 each-includes engraving (Badge free when joining)	\$5.00	
TOTAL PAID - DUES less Senior Discount plus Badge (if Applicable)		

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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 & DEALERS LIST: 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
- Include my name & address on a list provided to the Dealers selling at our Annual Opal & Gem Show.

Without your signature here you will not be included in the member info list or included in the dealer roster.

If you checked any box above, please sign here: _____ Date _____

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Email: webmaster@opalsociety.org

Article Deadline is the 20th of the month prior to each issue

Are Your Dues Due Now?

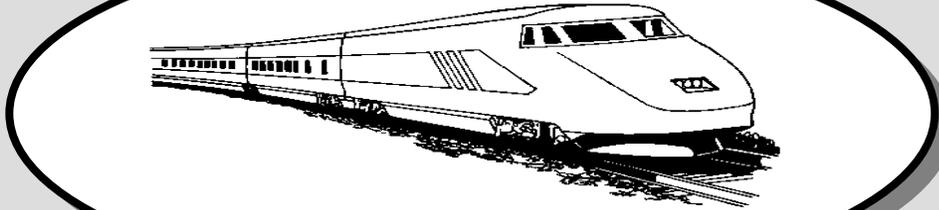
PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL. If your label shows the current month/year your dues are DUE NOW. If the date is older, your dues are overdue.

A 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.

Thank you,
The Editor

The Opal Express

Published
monthly by
The
American
Opal
Society



October 2002

Volume 35 Issue 10

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Mike Kowalsky

As you may expect, The AOS Board of Directors and the annual Show Committee are busy with the contracts, layout of the show room, advertising, prizes for the free raffle and the major raffle. We were pleased to receive a Collector's Copy of Stephen Aracic's opal book, *Rediscover Opals in Australia*. I had never seen one and didn't know that version existed until I visited Yowah and Lightning Ridge Festivals in 2001. I purchased one from Stephen at that time. It is unique, not because it is in hardcopy, but because it has a page marker with a precious stone of boulder opal attached to it. Some lucky raffle participant will own this outstanding prize. We thank Stephen and Mary Aracic for the donation of this wonderful raffle prize.

And of course, we already have received a copy of the newest collector series opal book, *A Journey With Colour, A History of White Cliffs Opal*, donated by Len Cram, for a prize in our grand raffle.

Jay Carey and I had a meeting with Dr. Jim Shigley and other members of the GIA Research Staff. We discussed some areas of potential mutual interest with the AOS. One of the areas we discussed is the nature of opal that crazes or cracks after it has been mined and even later after it has been set in jewelry for some time. We accepted the task of collecting opal samples with cracks or crazes that can be used in trying to determine what may be causing the problems. We are in need of samples that can be identified with the source of the opal to use in this endeavor. Any samples donated for this study may not be returned as it is possible that some destructive testing may be required. I have had some success in obtaining such samples that have the source firmly identified. Additional samples would be appreciated.

The workshop at Walker Jr. High School has been closed and our equipment and other items stored there have been moved to a storage facility. The remodeling of the facility caused the relocation to happen. We are currently looking for a new location to start our workshop again. At this time we are looking at three possible locations, which would be able to provide space for the workshop. I feel that we will be able to locate space for our workshop soon. However, if anyone has any suggested locations, please let me know as soon as possible.

IT'S HERE!!!

*The American Opal Society's
35th Annual*
ANNUAL OPAL & GEM SHOW
Largest Opal show in USA!

Sat. & Sun., November 2 & 3, 2002

Saturday 10AM - 6PM

Sunday 10AM - 5PM

Location: Quality Maingate Hotel
616 Convention Way **ANAHEIM**, California
Close to **DISNEYLAND**
One block South of Katella Ave.
On Harbor Blvd.

A few notes on our November show preparations. We are requesting donations from our members for items for the free raffle. The AOS Board will purchase some larger items for that raffle as well as the grand raffle, but many smaller prizes are needed for the free raffle. As usual we need members to donate some time for the front desk, which can be very crowded at times during the show. We will also need some help at the October meeting to help with our direct mailings and to distribute some of our show announcements.

We are having more seminars this show including two different presentations by Bonita Chamberlin on Gem Stones of Afghanistan and Gem Stones and the Economy of Afghanistan. I have seen both presentations and know that they are excellent and have outstanding pictures and graphics to support them. One presentation is on Saturday and the second one is on Sunday.

I'd like to thank everyone for the support we will need to make this annual show a success. See you at the October meeting!

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Opal & Gem Show Seminar Schedule

Saturday; November 2nd

11:00 am	Les Hoskins	Coober Pedy
1:00 pm	Bonita Chamberlin	Gemstones of Afghanistan
2:00pm	Walt Johnson	Beginning Techniques of Jewelry Inlay Design
3:00pm	Tony Thurber	Advanced Inlay Techniques for Jewelry Design

Sunday; November 3rd

10:00 am	Tim Thomas	Mining at Hayricks Mine; Boulder Opal Cutting
11:00 am	Barbara McCondra	Yowah Mining; Boulder Opal
1:00 pm	Bonita Chamberlin	Gemstones and the Afghanistan Economy

The Opals And Dinosaurs Exhibit

GIA Museum Display-GIA Headquarters, Carlsbad, CA.

*Located in the S. Tasaki Student Lecture and Graduation Hall.
Open thru Jan. 2003; Hours: 9am to 4PM, Mon. thru Fri. except
for holidays.*

The Museum of Natural History, Sydney Australia and the Cody Opal Company have created an outstanding exhibit of Opalized Fossils from the Dinosaur Age within the Cretaceous period that occurred about 110 million years ago. During the early Cretaceous period, a great inland sea covered much of the northern and central area of the Australian Continent. This inland sea, with its silica sediments, became the genesis of the Australian opal fields that have formed along its outline.

The Exhibit is described as an Exhibit of Opalized Fossils from the Dinosaur Age. While this is the main theme, there are a significant number of top quality opals from many opal-mining areas of Australia and a few from other parts of the world. Either part of the exhibit is more than worth your time and effort to see this outstanding exhibit at the GIA Headquarters Museum in Carlsbad, California.

The Australian Museum in Sydney and the Cody Opal Company are co-curators of Fossils from the Australian Opal Collection. This is the first time an exhibit of opalized fossils of this magnitude have been shown in the U.S. The exhibit is titled "Opal and the Dinosaurs" and was opened on June 6, 2002. It will remain open thru January of 2003. It definitely is a "must see" exhibit for all ages including children who will relate to the fossils from the early Cretaceous Period.

The major exhibits include a nine-foot diorama which depicts a very lifelike replica of a piosaur, a prehistoric marine reptile. Actual opalized parts; toes and ribs; of this prehistoric marine that were found in Lightning Ridge, are on display. There is an exhibit of opalized teeth of an early Platypus that were found in Lightning Ridge. Opalized turtle bones and crocodile teeth from Lightning Ridge are on display.

Additionally opalized plant parts from this era are on display also.

From Coober Pedy there is a display of an opalized Pilosaur bone. From Melbourne a part of a opalized Pilosaur flipper, that appears to be over 26 inches long, is displayed.

A collection of opalized marine snails and clam shells from Coober Pedy and Lightning Ridge, as well as a sharks tooth and a starfish on a marine snail. From Coober Pedy are five beautiful crystal opalized Belemnites in one large sands tone specimen.

The GIA Museum contains additional exhibits within the display area. These include a specimen of seam opal from Mintabie and a Painted Lady from Andamooka named "The Oil Fields". From Coober Pedy beautiful specimens of rough opal and a picture of an underground house. From Queensland is a magnificent display of Boulder Opal Specimens.

There is a picture in the background of this display, which is from the Len Cram book; A History of Queensland Opal, Volume One of A Journey with Colour. In that picture is a member of the American Opal Society; Barbara McCondra. She now is an opal miner in Yowah but has previously mined in Lightning Ridge. She also contributes articles to the Opal Express.

A spectacular display of Lightning Ridge black rough opal is a must to see.

Opal is displayed from other world locations that include the following: Mexico; Brazil; California, Virgin Valley and Idaho; Indonesia; Hungary. The Cody Opal Company also have an exhibit of Ethiopian Opal.

There is an interesting display of simulated and synthetic opal. One has a laser foil simulating black opal. It is constructed using a red colored stone with the foil between a black back. There are other crude samples of simulated stones using foil with resin tops. There is a sample of opalite, which is a plastic simulation of white opal. Synthetic stones include: Slocum Stones; Gilson black opal and blue opal; a vial with water contains synthetic stones created by Len Cram.

Cody Opal Company has a large display containing the following specimens: Large Andamooka treated matrix opal; an untreated Andamooka matrix opal. Olitic treated matrix opal, which has an unusual lavender color. From Coober Pedy a beautiful harlequin patterned triplet opal is displayed. There are also sampled of plastic impregnated and dyed Brazilian matrix opal.

The center island display contains many magnificent opal specimens. Included are a group of six magnificent boulder opals named "The Canyon". These pieces are approximately 24 inches long. There are two pieces of boulder opal that are named "The Volcano". There are specimens of opalized wood, opalized seedpods, Yowah nuts and rare water bubbles in opal knobbies from Lightning Ridge and Coober Pedy.

A small room off the side contains displays of very large opal mounted in jewelry. There are pendants with large crystal and black opal stones. A design of a mounting, with a fabulous opal, that can be part of a ring or a pendant. A necklace and earrings set that was the winner of the 1999 AGTA award. There is an outstanding freeform opal of 58 carats on display by David Burton; past president of AOS. A magnificent butterfly made from Yowah Opal by Debora Spencer. There is a 101-carat freeform opal by Randy Masters. Cody Opal has a heart shaped opal weighing 259 carats on display. A beautiful black opal pendant also is displayed. This part of the display should take a while to view and see all the outstanding opals and opal jewelry that is on display.

One last exhibit not to miss, is very large polished boulder opal on display near the viewing screen in front of the theater chairs. This boulder weighs about 200 pounds.

There is a 15-minute video which describes the evolution and formation of opal. It is named "Opal and the Dinosaur" and is very informative. If there are no other activities going on then the security personnel can rewind and run the video on request.

As you can see, this is an outstanding display of opal and opal fossils. It is a must see while the display is on in Southern California. There may be other reasons to visit Southern

California but this is a very strong reason to make that visit before the end of January 2003.

GIA Museum Opal Exhibit

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Opal Rubs

From the LAPIDARY DIGEST -LapDigest News

for Issue No 256 - 12/30/1999

Edited and Published by Hale Sweeny (hale2@mindspring.com)

Web Site: <http://www.lapidarydigest.com>

Subject: NEW: Opal Rubs

Last summer, before going to Wildacres, I bought some Opal rubs from JR Schroeder. Honestly, I had never seen a rub before, and didn't know what to do with them, but I was sure our instructor would know, and I would learn something new. Well, neither he nor anyone in the class he had ever heard of an opal rub! So I was on my own.

An opal rub is a stone with opal on one side, looking much like a seam opal. The opal looks like a paper-thin layer of opal on the stone; it may be on a flat or curvy surface.

The flat surfaced ones obviously may be capped, but what to do with the wavy ones? I tried flattening one and quickly ran through the opal layer back onto stone.

Anyone have any experience with rubs? If so, can you answer a few questions?

- Exactly what is a 'rub'?
- How do you work or treat one?
- On the curved ones, do you ever cover them with a coat of clear epoxy or other clear resin, or what to do?

It seems that the opal layer is so thin that it needs some protection of some kind. Is this true?

Hale

Subject: RE: Opal Rubs

The term "RUB", usually applies to Lightning Ridge nobbies that have been partially worked - i.e. ground down to the color. This takes some of the chance out of purchasing rough opal, especially the Lightning Ridge material. It can be very difficult to find the color in the nobbies. What you get in a Rub is a stone that has the color exposed and it is pretty much, what you see is what you get.

As to working one, all you need to do is define the shape and grind down the back, taking care not to remove too much of the black patch as this is what gives the intense color, i.e. don't grind into the crystal opal band. Polish out the "rubbed" surface and you are finished. In some cases, you might want to "rub" it a little more but use caution because as you stated, the color is very thin. NEVER, NEVER coat them with a coat of epoxy. Save that trick for seashells.

Don at Campbell Gemstone - Don@campbell-gemstones.com

Subject: Re: Opal Rubs

Hale, on the subject of rubs. If you get good rubs they should be prepared just so you can see the line of fire and get an idea of what is down there. They should show fire all around the edge of the stone so that you can see how deep the opal is. I generally do not buy rubs since I can do them myself, but for the inexperienced opal cutter this is the best way to go.

Most of the rubs I have seen on my trips to Australia and over here are good quality and can be cabbed with no problems. You generally have a return privilege on items you buy via the mail. I take a careful look at each rub and if they don't meet what I think they should be then I send them back.

Just remember the three rules of cutting opal are go slow, slower still and slower still. You cannot hurry a good stone. Some times if I am cutting real expensive material (\$2000 an ounce) I will take a day or better to finish the stone. I never go more than 2 or 3 seconds without stopping and looking at the stone.

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With continued buying trips to the Australian opal mines, we provide you with the lowest prices possible. We stock rough opals from \$10.00/ounce to \$5000.00/ounce from mines in Mintabie, Coober Pedy, Andamooka and the latest opal strikes in Lambina. Opals available by the ounce, gram or individual stone...special orders or shipping "no problems mate". We look forward to hearing from you!

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Steve chasing opals with a smile (and a pick), 15 mile diggings, Coober Pedy, Australia.



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Visit our Website

www.villagesmithyopals.com

I hope this helps. If anyone from the south is going to Tucson. I will be at the best western at the airport from the 3rd till the 7th.

Thanks,

Tim Vogle birdman@mindspring.com

Subject: RE: Opal Rubs

Hello Hale,

As to rubs: that is a very ambiguous term that applies mostly to Lightning Ridge opals. Most of the opals mined in L.R., with promise, are cut directly on the fields (who can afford to sell a stone for \$2000/oz, that when cut, may be worth \$2000-\$10,000/ct). So what happens to the stones that don't qualify as high grade and have the cutting process already begun, they are sold as rubs (Australians use rubbing synonymously with grinding or to grind on... rubs are stones that have been rubbed).

Many of these stones have thin layers of bright crystal sitting over black or blue patch. Some resemble pre-forms and some are merely unfinished semi-rough opal that has been ground on to see what the heck is inside.

There is a new video book series available (the first copies were shipped about 1 month ago) by Greg Pardey (Lightning Ridge opal cutter) on cutting black opal. The book is titled "Black

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Email: kellymc@ozemail.com.au
or iain@saopalgroup.com

Website: <http://www.saopalgroup.com>

Opal". The video is well done with very clear photography. Greg does a nice job of narrating the cutting process. He takes you through the complete finishing process and turns a very large nobbie (with gorgeous blue/green/orange fire... wish I could try cutting one like that) into several finished cabs that must be worth upwards of \$2000/ct.

The price of the video/book is \$99.00. I think that at that price it is still a bargain. I plan to order 10 copies to sell, but right now I only have the one copy that was sent to me with the original shipment. The books can be ordered through Greg directly or through Peter Bo at Quality Opals (or through me in about one month). Greg's E-mail address is grcr@senet.com.au and Peter Bo at Quality Opals is quality.opals@senet.com.au. I am not sure what the price for shipping was but I think it was \$15.00.

I am going to have a complete book revue of this book/video and of Paul Downing's new book in my next edition of "The Opalfield Newsletter" that I send out quarterly (next one sometime in January). Here is a direct quote, from Greg's new book, on RUBS:

RUB or RUBDOWN: The general term for grinding opal to see what is in it, and of course to cut it, hence words like, rubbing down wheel and 'rubs', the term applied to stones for sale that have only been roughly rubbed into shape and are either cut from that stage or are sold as that. The term probably came from ancient lapidaries who had to actually rub down by hand

Thanks again Hale and I hope this helps (and I got to be a know-it-all).

Steve and Darlene Newstrom
The Village Smithy Opals P.O. Box 1334 Billings, MT 59103-1334 USA
vsmithy@prodigy.net 406-651-4947

Subject: RE: Opal Rubs

Hi Folks,

While I have no experience with the very thin stuff except in hand grinding paper-thin opal wafers to make up triplets, I expect a "rub" or very thin layer of opal on matrix will be amenable to similar treatment as any uneven, baroque opal surface.

One such baroque opal which I just finished for a client is a piece called "Millennium Bug no.1" It's in sterling silver and 14 kt. gold, and you can see what it looks like via Keith Rigby's site at <http://www.opalrough.com/smallstone/smallstn.html>.

The largest of the three opals is a baroque. I had to grind down fairly deep to get past the pits. This was done with a small 100 grit diamond wheel about the diameter of a dime turning at roughly 900 rpm in a stationary chuck, the stone being kept constantly moving under the wheel in a crisscross pattern. Two inches below stood a dish of water into which the stone was dipped as needed.

The marks from coarse grinding were then smoothed out with the aid of a hardwood broomstick. I sawed off a 1/4" slice of the broomstick, put a hole approximately in the middle, mounted the disc on a finishing nail to serve as shaft, clamped it in the chuck and turned it, dry, against coarse sandpaper to center the disk and to slightly crown it. Then I spun it against some beeswax and then against a hardwood dowel to heat the beeswax and melt it in. I don't know if this is necessary. Maybe it's overkill. But that's what I did. Finally I applied 1,200 grit diamond in Vaseline to the hardwood wheel, and the wheel to the stone. It did an excellent job. For the next step I sawed a slit into a similarly made broomstick wheel and slipped a piece of 2,000 grit wet-or-dry silicon carbide paper into the slit to hold it against the wheel. You can get this paper from your local auto body supply shop. Last came polishing with grease-based 14,000 grit diamond on a hard felt wheel. The polish came up beautifully clear. In fact, I'm quite taken with 14,000 grease based diamond on hard felt for agate and labradorite also. But you need to watch out for heat when polishing on felt. Also, for an opal rub on porous matrix a grease based polish might impregnate itself into the matrix and discolor it. If it's a high value stone you might want to treat the matrix with waterglass or mucilage to be dissolved out again later.

Cheers,

Hans Durstling, sinico@nbnet.nb.ca, Moncton, Canada

Subject: RE: Opal Rubs

Hi Hale, In Australia when a miner looks at a piece of rough opal and thinks there might be something there he will RUB it on the grinding wheel. If there is nothing there it will go into the mine run pile. If on the other hand it has cutting potential it will go to a cutter. Lots of the lower grade opal will be rubbed like this and sold to us in the USA as opal rubs. This is fine in a way because you can see what you are getting (sort of). But unfortunately many times they RUB too deep and make it hard or impossible to cut a nice finished opal from it.

Most black opal is just a very thin layer of color on a black potch base. If it is finished right you can't tell how much is color and how much is potch unless you look very close. Also if it is finished right you won't care how thick the fire layer is you will be to busy admiring the colors you can see. If you have a piece of opal with wavy lines then it is best finished like you would a piece of fire agate. Try to follow the lines of color up and down and leave the top wavy when you are done. I have seen some very nice opals cut in this fashion. This is hard to do especially the polishing phase but the results are worth it.

I hope this answers some of your questions Hale. I want to take this opportunity to say thank you for making this online forum possible and to wish you and everyone else a Happy New Year!

Have a great day,
Michael Sielaff <Mijo730@aol.com> www.mijo-opals.com

Yella Jimmy - Part 2

[A short story of a past]

By Colin W. Wurth

In Sydney a month after this meeting I received a strange yet lovely letter from Tim. Like a lot of things that should be treasured it was lost in time. I still remember its sad finality, missing from it was Tim's outgoing life loving approach to life, replaced by a sort of somber goodwill towards me. It was written with a shaky hand and I remember thinking he must have been

ill and that I would visit him in the near future. I didn't realise this was Tim's farewell note until I received the news of his death about two weeks later. The only friend he had in the village beside our family found Tim in his strange little house. I was upset, I could have shed a tear I cannot remember, I knew I had lost a partner and the mine was not of the same interest now.

After months passed and my youthful life was as always unfolding but one night I had a sort of compulsion to read Tim's letter again I took it from the little drawer I had in my bedroom and in silence and with a certain sadness I began to read it. I finished the letter, which was written on crumpled paper, so like Tim he was born of a time that nothing was wasted and I idly thought that the paper might have been used to wrap some meat of other necessity for him. I placed the letter down and as I did I noticed for the first time that there was something written on the back. I picked up the letter to study the words more carefully, my interest was absolute, the words on the back were scrawled in the same way as on the front and they read clearly, "sixteen south, ten miles west".

I studied them for a moment then it dawned on me. these were the distances between the old opal mining town and the abandoned homestead, I then knew that this was Tim's way of telling me the location of the mine because only we had talked about the area in such detail, I knew that Tim guarded his secret and he mistrusted most things about it as he had showed with the Hungarian opal miner only I would know what the figures meant and Tim knew that when he wrote them, the memory of Tim flooded back to me once again and this time a tear did form in my eye as I thought of the loss of the old man as a friend and of all the years of stories and good times which were never to be again after a while I went to the closet in the room that contained all the material I had collected about "Yella Jimmy".

I withdrew an old army ordinance map one which had been pored over many times but not with the accuracy of description I now had, I spread it on the bed and located the general area easily, I can remember I was absorbed, I knew exactly what I was looking for although all then words I had stored I never had any real direction for them, Opalton was located easily and I ran my finger down the map with excited expectation. The ordinance maps of those times were extremely accurate and on the smallest scale possible in those time, "four miles to the inch," showed every feature no matter how small and my finger stopped on what I calculated as approximately ten miles and when it did my heart jumped a little for exactly on the spot was a feature that showed a low range of hills that ran in a north south direction just what I was looking for, my eyes now roamed to the west of the map, I was eager and knew what I was looking for and my eyes found it in a flash, I will never forget reading the words that were underneath a small dot on the map "abandoned homestead Maynside".

I was now excited and did a quick calculation on the map and ten miles was the distance that coincided with the other direction and it all fitted. I went with youthful and jumping heart and took a manual of old opal mines in that area that I had been able to find to see if Tim's version of another working was in the area and after some time I found it as well, it had not been worked after the turn of the century and only produced a small quantity as Tim had said, the pieces of the jig saw now were fitting together with his words, my memory and detailed location on the distant lonely and isolated site, I remember poring over the maps and information on the area for hours, my mother came into the room several times and I still remember I didn't even tell her of the news, I remembered Tim's words and I took a pledge, this information was to be shared with no one, he had given it to me as a sort of protector and I resolved to do exactly that.

The dream that had been Tim's, nurtured and relished by both of us had not died, I had inherited his dream and my resolve was as strong as his. I lay on the bed and thought of my plans, I knew, like Tim, I would have to undertake the operation by myself I had learnt enough by that early tune that you could trust few in

the world amid especially with a prospect of this potential worth,



Firebird Opal

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www.firebirdopal.com.au

so a plan of action and execution was being forged under the dim light in that bedroom that night.

I had meager resources in those days of my youth, nether the less I began to organise a sole expedition to this lonely and hostile location. I was again reminded by all of the foolhardy nature of what I was doing. It was only a dream of an old man. I was told by acquaintance and family alike, "all miners have a story like this, "my father told me, my mother told me I was far to young to undertake such a project and suggested I tell this person or that, it was the last thing I intended to do. The knowledge was mine and Tim's and I was determined we would find it together. I was just seventeen and my plans were also looked upon as a dream and obsession of youth, I suddenly knew how Tim must have felt for so many years. Stupid boy has been taken in by an old miners dream, was scoffed I am sure more than once out of my company but I cared little, my purpose was absolute and my conviction only grew with adversity.

The purchase of an old Landrover was very nearly negotiated but fell through when it was found I needed the signature of one of my parents to finalize the deal. I knew without even asking that this was not to be forth coming. I still knew that this was a temporary obstacle and I would have to wait for six months for its purchase and in the meantime there was plenty of organisation and planning to be done. I saved every penny I could, I costed the project and had the equipment that I needed costed and located, the project obsessed me for that brief time, it made me a sort of object of humor in both my

adult amid contemporary world, I didn't care, I was single minded, but as often happens to youth love made a fool of me. I met and fell in love with a girl who along with everyone else saw my dreams as interesting but not of this world and her gravitational pull began to exercise the folly of my dream. Life continued, her attraction to me and mine to her grew and Tim's dream diminished as a result and so it was I finally married. The prospect of the hostile region and its hidden beauty diminished daily, a child came along amid my world became absorbed in the world of the young adult, responsibility, directions, purpose, all combined to push Tim's dream into the background but certainly not out of the picture.

Over the years I would think of the place out in the wilderness hiding the flashing raw colors of Tim's opal. I only ever told the general story of the opal, never the human detail of what was my knowledge of Tim and his dream. I never wavered in the interest that I had as a little boy and I did retain an interest, albeit from the sidelines, of opal and the people who flowed around the stone. Life went on for twenty years, my child grew up and although I tried to interest him, he had the attitude of most other people. He was helped to a great degree by his mother who treated my now small dream from the past as a middle-aged folly of sorts.

Life ground on, the occasional flicker of the dream would occur, like the fabulous colors that Tin, had described in my childhood Finally with my child out in the world and carving his own version of life with determination my wife and I agreed to separate, our interests were not the same, they probably never were. My life took on a futile sort of middle aged torpor, I settled into the accepted role of the aging single male, the dream of Tim's mine though not forgotten languished in my memory. One memorable day I was drinking in a hotel, which I occasionally frequented and was listening to a conversation between the owner and a group of his patrons. The conversation interested me, he was a younger man but he seemed to awaken something in me, he had an adventurous spirit that could not be hidden, he was a flyer of planes as a hobby and his world seemed to be interested in adventure, I observed him with greater interest, indeed I would come to his hotel and talk to him of his dreams and all the things he would like to tackle he impressed me there was something in him that reminded me of those days when I had the same sort of dreams, he began to awaken the dreams of my youth but it was some time before I told him of Yella Jimmy, when I did our relationship took a turn, his interest was absolute as I told him bare details of the story, he asked questions, he probed, I knew his interest began to grow with every meeting we had it seemed at last I had found somebody who could share Tim's dream and unbeknown to him my interest to began to rise, as if dragged from the drudgery of life to display its sparkle in a new but now more mature fashion.

A phone call came to my flat one night it was late and I wondered who it may be, I thought of my son, of sonic emergency. When I answered I heard the words of my recent soul mate in dreams "Gday mate," I knew his voice but before I could say anything more he continued "listen mate lam about to shut up the pub would you mind if I came around to your place for a short time, I have been doing a bit of thinking, "the conversation went on and I agreed.

Mark turned up at the door, I immediately knew something was on his mind, I offered him a drink and we sat down. He was unusually silent, as if he were about to ask a question but didn't, finally asked in slightly humorous manner, "they playing up at the pub Mark "he smiled and is if my words were his excuse to begin he started to speak seriously "no male, look I have been giving that story that you have been telling me the last few months a lot of bloody thought, "he paused and took a large draught from his beer. I looked at him curious now, "and well I don 't know but it seems to me it would be pretty easy to fly up there and see if you are right or not, I mean I have got that four seater for exactly these sort of reasons, it gives me a pain sometimes when I am in

the bloody hotel and its sitting in a hanger, "I smiled and gave him a nod, I knew Mark was a man of action and I also knew that he listened intently when we talked about Tim's dream but I didn't expect him to do more than other people over the years that is file it under "love to but "I began to study him in a different light now, unknown to him I had often thought along the same lines when ever he told his stories of flying here amid there amid the light that came into his eyes when he described his adventure but I thought idly that the matter would have to be bought up by him, I thought thirty years ago I would have seen the opportunity as gold itself Mark was about forty and during the time I had known him he always gave me the impression he was in part a lot like me frustrated and getting older in a fast and changing world I smiled a little to myself the prospect of two middle aged men questing for a thirty year old dream lost in time in a tangled world "well look mate I have been doing a bit of reckoning and I think the whole thing would, "I interrupted him at this point with a warm smile, "your serious aren't you Mark," I said in a pleasant fashion, "bloody oath you old barstard, I haven't been to that part of the world and even if what you say turns out to be a dud at least it will get me out of the bloody place down there for a few weeks."

Mark was about ten years younger than myself and I smiled at his reference to me as an "old barstard". I took a draught from my beer and looked at him for a moment then rose without saying anything and went to a battered old briefcase which contained papers I had carried around for years, ones that I deemed as important, he looked at me as I sat down and began to sort through the contents, finally I produced a yellowed old map of the opal bearing areas in Queensland I watched as his eager eyes ran over it, Tin, was a lifelong abstainer and a great advocate against alcohol but I thought he would have liked Mark, my mind drifted back to him, I wondered what he would say if he walked into the room now, Mark would point to the map amid make remarks like, "yeah, I have been there, " or, "knew a bloke who went there, "his eyes roamed for what I thought a long time leaving me free to assess the rather new situation, finally I said that's a bloody old map Mark, a bit like you, "he smiled and I continued, "I am sure there is technology and maps I could get that would suit the purpose far better," Mark took his eyes from the map and sat back in his chair, his face turned serious and expectant at the same time, "well are you interested then "I smiled if Mark only knew how interested I was he wouldn't wear that expression of expectation I nodded "well Mark old fellow we are not getting any younger you know". Mark smiled and the discussion turned to more serious matters and drinks flowed till the early hours of the morning.

Conclusion next month

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Crazed Opal Advice

E-mail chain with some of our members.

Pat...

>> I have a large (approximately 8 carats) antique white fire opal ring that has apparently dried out. It has a fine webbing over the top, but magnificent color still shows through. Is it possible able to cut off the top of the opal to get rid of the webbing, then polish it so that much of its beauty is restored? <<

Caveat at the outset. If this stone has crazed, removing the webbing you see should probably be viewed as a temporary fix. The stone has exhibited a tendency to craze and may well have a propensity for doing this again at some time in the future.

That said, I have resurfaced opals in their settings with good results. Never to remove crazing but rather scratches and abrasions on the stone's surface, i.e. wear from normal use.

>> Or, does the webbing go clear through to the base so that this is this impossible? <<

It is possible the crazing (which is presumably what we are talking about) penetrates deeply into the stone. If it is only shallow, yes there is a possibility of sanding or gently grinding it

off and repolishing the opal. Heat must be avoided during this process at all times. Of course a significant portion of the opal will be removed in the process. Your 8 carat stone may become a 4 carat stone.

Strong light and magnification might be of assistance in determining the depth of the crazing. I use a pocket 30x microscope to look into an opal's interior.

However, this is a white opal - it is probably somewhat opaque, at least translucent - and it may not be possible to look into the body of the stone far enough to ascertain the depth of the crazing. Because of this the decision of whether to undertake removal of the crazing is probably going to be more difficult. It may be necessary to grind or sand away some material and look again. And then to keep doing this a thin layer at a time. These steps would proceed with no guarantee of being able to remove the crazing lines because they are being performed in part to advance the examination of the stone's interior.

Speaking of removing layers, it is important to realize that the nature of the structure of opal tells us that the part of the opal responsible for its color play may also be ground away during this repair effort. Removing the crazed portions includes the definite potential to change forever the stone's appearance (for better or for worse). This issue should be addressed as part of the initial examination before any work is undertaken. And perhaps reviewed as progress is being made. There is another consideration to be mentioned in that changing the "dome" of an opal can change how it appears to the viewer.

A possible alternative to grinding, sanding and resurfacing. There are products on the market that might be viewed as "crack fillers". These do not repair the crazing lines in an opal, but merely penetrate somewhat to make the cracks less visible. There are varied results with these substances. In some cases an opal looks "brand new". In other cases the stone still shows crazing lines, sometimes diminished in appearance - sometimes not. It has been reported that some of these filler products turn yellow with age.

>> If possible, how much would it cost? <<

I am not offering to undertake this process but at least in my mind (whether I told you so or not) I would be charging by the hour at a rate of about \$20 per hour. I might provide a definite price after examining the stone carefully but the time to remove the crazing is directly related to the shape of the stone, depth of the crazing and manner in which the stone is set. All these factors and others combine. I have resurfaced a stone in an hour; I have also taken 10 hours or more.

That does bring up a comment. The present shape of the opal and the type of setting will have a considerable impact on the time involved in such a repair. The setting's style may determine whether it is possible to complete the recutting without taking the opal out of its setting. I have never removed an opal from its setting for this process. If removing the stone from the setting is deemed to be necessary additional considerations arise. Exposed to the forces of removal, the opal might break or be further damaged (given that it is already in a somewhat compromised condition). To avoid harming the opal it might be necessary to damage or destroy the setting. For these reasons I have always masked off the setting and reworked the opal in place.

>> Who would be a good jeweler for the task? <<

In my opinion, the proper individual to address your opal's condition would be an expert lapidary artist who has experience and considerable background cutting and polishing opal. This person should also have some qualifications as a metal smith but that will be a secondary skill in this situation.

A final thought about finding someone locally because you really need to have direct involvement yourself during the assessment process. You should be able to show your opal to someone without letting it out of your control. I would recommend asking around for lapidary arts clubs in your area. Try the yellow pages. A Internet search for the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies is a good place to start. Then move to the regional federation for Oklahoma and nearby states. This federation is where the majority of clubs will be found. Try to find someone who has experience cutting and polishing opal.

Russ Madsen

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How To Shape And Polish Opals Without Machinery

Opal is a hydrated silica with varying amounts of moisture. Its hardness varies from 5.5 to 6.5. This method of cutting and polishing opal practically eliminates fracturing from heat. There are four basic steps in shaping and polishing:

1. Sanding off the matrix on both sides to locate the best fire.
2. Rough shaping the stone.
3. Sanding and pre-polishing, which results in the final shaping and size.
4. Final polishing the gemstone.

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. A carborundum stone, double grit [sold by most hardware stores].
2. Wet or Dry Sandpaper, 400 and 600 grit.
3. A piece of inner tube, 6" square.
4. Two pieces of corduroy or velvet material, 6" square.
5. Polishing agent, Tripoli or Tin Oxide.
6. Aluminum pie pan.
7. Dopstick and household glue or cement.

INSTRUCTIONS: Place carborundum stone on the inner tube in the pan, course side up. Pour water on the stone until some stands on top. Always work opal on a very wet stone. With a circular motion, grind off matrix on both sides to reveal the best fires. Mark size of desired stone on the back of the opal and grind down to size. When size has been obtained, wash opal, carborundum stone, inner tube and pan. **DO THIS BETWEEN EACH PROCESS.**

Now the opal is ready to be dopped. Use a cold dop of household cement. Coat the end of the dopstick. Also coat the back of the opal. Let it set a minute, then press together. Stand in modeling clay or other support to dry, about eight hours. When the opal is set on the dopstick, use the coarse side of the carborundum stone to shape the opal. Wash all equipment. Then, this time, using the fine side of the stone, sand out all the scratches, wash and proceed. Go through this process first using the 400, then the 600 sanding paper. The opal should



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have a pre-polish on it. For the final polish, use the same process with the tin oxide. A little Linde A may be added to the tin oxide if you wish. To remove the stone when finished, soak overnight in water and the stone will come loose. Good luck and may you have a beautiful stone. Malachite, Turquoise, Chrysocolla, as well as many other stones under 6.5 hardness may be polished with this method.

From Petrograph via Rock Rollers, 8/00., Via Rockcollector 12/00

“Paua Shell” - New Zealand Opal

By Ross Cranswick

Paua is a beautiful shell known for its beautiful colors. There are many tricks to working with the shell. The Paua shell occurs only in New Zealand. It is the same as the Abalone shell but possesses bright colors, Blues, Greens, Pinks, and Yellows, etc. To export these shells from New Zealand one must obtain a license and this is also required to own or keep these shells.

There are basically 2 grades of paua shell - thin & thick! There are more but to keep it simple we will mention these. The thick shells are old large shells Called “Carvers” and used as the name suggests for carving, Some Shells possibly up to 10 mm thick. The thin shells are generally from the North Island & some upper South Island areas. They are thinner due to a lack of feed and limestone in the water, whereas the thicker shells tend to be on or near limestone type deposits. The thin Shells, were the shells that brought big money several years back from the Asian Market as they were used for inlay work into wood boxes and the like, really great looking stuff. These thin shells have a great color but were always looked down upon by the jewelry trade as being too thin to work with as cabs.

The Jewelry trade has many tricks for the unwary customer. Firstly “Generally-All” Paua jewelry exported to the USA has been dyed Blue. The reason is that Americans Like and will buy Blue-rich Royal type Blues! And so you will see nothing else- sad isn't it. You miss out on all the wonderful colors that the shell really has to offer. The Shell does not need to be dyed, it saddens me to see it happen, but the market drives it to be done.

The Basic Commercial process for using this shell is as follows. The shell should not be worked with water! The water in combination with the shell can produce Chlorine Gas and you will be poisoned via the skin and via the lungs. It is best to work the shell dry with a 60 carborundum wheel and a vacuum unit to take away the dust. This method quickly removes the white lime like outer coating about 2 minutes per shell. After this the shell is normally placed in a hydrochloric acid to clean away dust and brighten it up to judge for color and what will be done with it. By holding the shell up to a light you are able to see through it to see if it is too thin for making into a display shell. The shell is moved on to cutting up for cabs or you can then dry belt sand the shell 120 then 320 ready for lacquering as a display shell that you may have seen.

Cab making: The shell is normally sliced flat just above the thick rim. The Rim serves no purpose as such but can be cut & capped for tooth like jewelry. The inside of the shell is coated with a thick black epoxy Glue to thicken it up. It is then cut into strips and then squares ready to be rounded for cabs. Once rounded the cabs are sanded all dry with 180 and then 320 belts. They are damp sorted for color matching and the bluest looking are sent into the Blue Dyeing barrel for a week. Once dried and cleaned the shell cabs are coated with a lacquer (non-yellowing of course!) and set into Jewelry.

For Designer type jewelers I would personally recommend the inside colors of the shell to be used and these can produce really unique pieces. These can be saw-pierced out to your shape as desired. Easy to use is a diamond-piercing saw easily obtainable from a rock shop. A light sanding and polishing with rough will produce a high gloss that will last well, particularly if near body oils as these are soaked up into the shell continually. A simple and easy way of lacquering the shell ready as cabs or other jewelry items (if you don't want a natural polish that is) is to

use clear nail polish several coatings will produce a long lasting hardwearing finish that is hard to beat. The shell is really easy to work with as long as you remember these simple rules:

Don't breathe in the dust, In simple terms -The dust has barbs like a fishhook and will cause serious damage to your lungs. Always wear a mask and have suction. The same applies to abalone shells also.

Do not work the shell wet to avoid chlorine poisoning through the skin and lungs and think about others if they are in a room with you- It is possible to poison them and not you. The same applies to abalone shells also.

Always ask for un-dyed shells. Enjoy the natural beauty that the shell has to offer, not the artificial rubbish as sold by many. A good guide is if it looks really blue it is dyed.

CAN YOU SAY PAUA?

Ross tells me it is properly said PAR- Wa. He also reports that some Australians say PA-wa just as some US southerners drop their R's (including me on occasion).

From the B.C. Rockhounder, 6-2002

Blue Opal

From the LAPIDARY DIGEST - LapDigest News for Issue No 214 & 215, from 6/21/99 to 6/25/99

Edited and Published by Hale Sweeny (hale2@mindspring.com)

Web Site: <http://www.lapidarydigest.com>

Subject: Blue Opal & other Cutables

(This was submitted by Terry Vasseur in response to a BIO from Gladys Reyna which appeared in the last issue (#213). For some reason, Terry could not contact Gladys directly and asked that I pass it on. I think this will turn into a big thread, so I am giving it a NEW subject. In the BIO, Gladys said: "We normally work with BLUE OPAL, GEM SILICA CHRYSOCOLLA, PINK OPAL, YELLOW OPAL and other Peruvian and South American gemstones.) - Hale Gladys,

I read your BIO on the Lap Digest. Welcome aboard. I have some pieces of blue opal I acquired last January at Quartzsite, possibly from someone you know.

My first question is: how many sources are there for that material? To date, I've only experimented with a couple of the smaller, lower quality pieces I bought, and the results were pretty good. I've cut a lot of opalized wood from Nevada and have found the Peruvian blue cuts and polishes very much like that.

My next question has to do quality of the material. The material I have is nice but it has a lot of inclusions.

The blue with white, similar to a cloud streaked sky, is OK but the black and brown stuff detracts from the beauty. What kind of material do you have available and are there various quality grades?

Finally, I don't believe I have ever seen the other materials you mentioned. I'm always interested in acquiring and trying something new. Please tell us about them and about any problems working them, and their prices.

I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

Terry - WookmansTV@aol.com

(In his original query, Terry asked that Gladys send him a brochure and sent his home address, which I sent directly to Gladys. The above is an edited rewrite of Terry's query.)
hale

Subject: RE: Blue Opal & other Cutables

Terry mentioned in his reply that he had never seen the other minerals that Gladys was working with. We would like to direct you to our website: <http://www.chrysocolla.com> We have a lot of pictures of Gem Silica Chrysocolla from Arizona. It is quite a nice material, and comes in many grades and a variety of blues and greens. Right now, the largest mine (Ray Mine) has

had a cave-in so the quantities will be scarce for a time until they decide to get around to digging it out.

Thanks!

Paul & Cathy Gallagher <Copperccg@aol.com>
Gallagher Minerals

Subject: RE: Blue Opal & other Cutables
(Reprinted from Rockhounds, with Permission)

Regarding the Blue Opal; It's not fire opal, but a deep blue material. It takes a nice polish, but it's soft like opal. Not that great for rings.

Gem silica is Chrysocolla impregnated with silica, so it's as hard as quartz. The best material is a deep electric blue and comes from AZ. The Peruvian material is more of a greenish color, but is still pretty. It's prized because of its color and hardness.

It's worth buying but be careful. Anything with copper can be toxic. Cut it with lots of water and don't breathe the dust. Hope this help.

Regards,
Ben Hyman <BHyman3431@aol.com>

Subject: RE: Blue Opal & other Cutables
[Reproduced from Rockhounds with Permission of Author]

I have done some chemical tests on the so-called "pink opal" from Peru, and a friend of mine did XRD on it. We came to the following conclusion: It is really SILICIFIED PLYGORSKITE, and not opal at all! Opal exists in hundreds of localities worldwide, but I don't know of any other locality for silicified palygorskite, so this makes the pink stuff more interesting. I think, from the point of view of both mineralogy and gemology. Also, since it isn't really opal, the lapidarists among us don't have to worry about it slowly dehydrating and cracking like many opals do, and it probably wouldn't be as heat-sensitive as opal during cutting.

Alfredo Petrov - fred@albatros.cnb.net, Cochabamba, Bolivia

Subject: RE: Blue Opal & other Cutables

In case you want to see pictures of the BLUE OPAL and PINK OPAL (PLYGORSKITE?) please go to:

<http://www.mineralart.com/mineperu>

Regards

GLADYS REYNA, MINING CENTER PERU

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AOS Field Trip to Spencer Idaho

By Mike Kowalsky

The summer was fleeing fast and I could only get one other AOS member to commit to the field trip to Spencer Idaho. So Bob Dixon and I made our arrangements for a stop in Beaver Utah on the way up to Spencer and a room at the Cross Roads Motel in Dubois Idaho. AJ Couture from the Spencer Opal Mine had given us the phone numbers and the directions.

So off we went, in my trusty van, with an early morning start. The directions were easy, once we were on Interstate 15 we stayed on it until we saw the turnoff to Spencer. Of course we had to stop to eat, and Mesquite Nevada seemed like a nice choice. A buffet at one of the casinos was very reasonable and filled the bill. I was pleasantly surprised, when shortly after Mesquite; Highway 15 went through a red rock canyon, which I believe was in Arizona. It is a very picturesque drive that went through beautiful rock canyons and mountains until we made it thru to the Utah side. The drive north along Hwy 15 has views of picturesque mountains all along the way thru Utah. I found out we could see mountains that form a part of the Zion National Park are visible from the highway. I have made a note to return to visit that part of Zion because those mountains were so beautiful.

Our stop in Beaver was uneventful but our motel was on the old highway, which required us to go thru the interesting town.

We had a long way to go thru Utah and we made it to Idaho Falls where we stopped for dinner. Finding the Cross Roads Motel in Dubois was more of a challenge even though it is the only motel in town. It is at a dead end with signs pointing the way. However, you don't have any confidence that you are going the right way until you see its neon sign.

The next morning we were off to Spencer, which was only 16 miles away. We knew that the Couture's have a Café and it was open for breakfast. After our first meal, we made sure we ate every meal at their café. It has short but excellent menu. Some of the biggest pancakes and oatmeal breakfasts we had ever seen.

We spent some time visiting with Claudia and looking over all the rough opal and finished opal in their shop, which was integrated into the Café. I now have a very nice opal stone and a new challenge in a piece of rough opal that I need to learn how to cut. I also have a very nice piece of rough opal to display in the showcase; Opal from North and South America.

After lunch, we were surprised to find out that AJ would be waiting for us to give us a tour of their Opal Mine. We were given the directions and off we went. As it was dry, I had no problems getting my van up to the mining site. Of course the mining was not in progress, while we were on the site, because of safety considerations. It was a beautiful day and the view from the mountainside was very nice. AJ took us through the open pit area where the mountain was slowly giving up its treasures. He explained the geology of the mountain and how it was believed that the opal was formed. It seemed that there was extensive volcanic action in the area many years ago. Following the volcanic activity, a hot springs developed in this particular area. After many more years the hot springs slowly disappeared. It was probably in this phase that the opal was formed. Looking a map one discovers that Yellowstone National Park is not very far away as the crow flies and the geology there seems to be more recent than in the Spencer area. I was impressed with the fact that while most of Spencer Opal is formed in sheets or layers and does make some of the most brilliant triplets in the world, but it is found in solid form also. I did see some jewelry set with the solid opals from Spencer in Claudia's and AJ's store.

We viewed the area, which was set aside for the lucky people that would be coming to dig for opal over the Labor Day Holiday. This mine is one of the few left that allows individuals to come and mine and saves the tailings for them. Many of the larger pieces had never been split to see if there was precious opal inside. We were able to pick up small pieces of rough opal just by turning over some of the loose tailings.

Most exciting was a new area that was being uncovered and mining had begun. In that particular area, the opal changes from a clear base to a pink base. I had never seen pink base opal before. It certainly is a very attractive color. It may be introduced at some of the Gem Shows this winter. I have a piece of tumbled pink patch that I found in their showroom, enough to show the shade of pink.

Later that afternoon, Bob and I visited the three other opal shops in Spencer. There are three mines in the Spencer field, which supply the rough to the four shops. To my surprise, three out of the four shops receive the Opal Express and immediately knew who we were. Each had different rough and finished opal to sell. I will not forget the two opal triplets that I viewed in the Idaho Mines shop. One was about the size of a silver dollar and had the most brilliant flash of red, which was visible at any angle. It looked like a red spot light even across the room. It had a companion that was about the size of a quarter. Either would be a prized addition to anyone's collection or in any jewelry.

Later that evening, after having dinner at the Spencer Café, we met with Claudia and AJ at their workshop. We had an extensive tour of their workshop and watched how they processed their rough opal and created the superb triplets and other stones. We were later joined by Mark Stettler, Claudia's father, who remembered me from the early days of the American

Opal Society. He brought some very delicate carvings that were created by Marvin Wilson who was known as Carvin Marvin. We reminisced about the early days of the Opal Society Shows at the Norwalk City Hall location and the many people that we had known through the show. I first met Tim and Barbara Thomas there and of course John Hall also.

The next day we took some pictures of the most expensive outdoor fountain located by the Spencer Store and Café. However, I could only get AJ to pose by the fountain, which is made of large boulders of Spencer Rough Opal. It is Claudia's fountain.

We had a wonderful trip to the Spencer Opal Mining area. I wish to thank Claudia and AJ Couture for their great hospitality in receiving us and giving us the tour of the mine and their workshop. I hope to visit again. Perhaps we could plan another field trip back to Spencer next year and plan to do some mining at the same time. There may be some additional locations to visit on a trip to that area.

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OCTOBER GEM SHOWS

5-6--SAN FRANCISCO, CA: Show, "The Great San Francisco Crystal Fair"; Pacific Crystal Guild; Fort Mason Center, Laguna and Marina Blvd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; admission \$4, children under 12 free; up to 45 vendors of crystals, minerals, gems, jewelry, mystical and healing arts; contact Jerry Tomlinson, PCG, P.O. Box 1371, Sausalito, CA 94966, (415) 383-7837; e-mail: sfxtl@earthlink.net; Web site: www.crystalfair.com.

5-6--VISTA, CA: Show; Vista Gem and Mineral Society; Brengle Terrace Community Recreation Center, 1200 Vale Terrace Dr.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission; 13 dealers in gems, fossils, equipment, slabs, rough, minerals, carvings, blown glass, beads, faceted stones, supplies, opals, etc.; 40 exhibit cases; 0 demonstrations of wire wrapping, Kachina doll carving, silversmithing, titanium artistry, painting on rock, Chinese knotting, dichroic glass, silver fabrication; wheel of fortune, magazine table, raffle, country store, free gem identification, rock dinner table, club-operated snack bar; contact Mary Anne Mital, (760) 758-4599, or Lois Harr, (760) 724-0395.

11-13--BIG SUR, CA: 11th annual show, "Big Sur Jade Festival"; South Coast Community Land Trust and Pacific Valley School PTO; Pacific Valley School, on Highway 1; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-6; free admission; jade, gems and lapidary arts from worldwide locations; wood and stone sculptures by Big Sur artists; barbecue, raffle, live music; contact Kirk Brock, (505) 238-6716.

11-13--COSTA MESA, CA: Show; Gem Faire; Orange County Fairgrounds, Bldg. 12, Arlington Ave.; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-7, Sun. 10-5; weekend pass \$5; contact Allen Van Volkinburgh, (760) 747-9215; Web site: www.gemfaire.com.

11-13--COSTA MESA, CA: Show; Martin Zinn Expositions; Holiday Inn-Bristol Plaza, 3131 S. Bristol; Fri. 10-7, Sat. 10-7, Sun. 10-5; free admission; 85 dealers from countries including France, Brazil, Russia and India; contact Martin Zinn Expositions, P.O. Box 999, Evergreen, CO 80437-0999, (303) 674-2713; e-mail: MZ0955@aol.com; Web site: www.mzexpos.com.

11-13--MOAB, UTAH: 43rd annual show; Moab Points & Pebbles Club; Spanish Trail Arena, 3641 S. Hwy. 191; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; free admission; field trips; contact Jimmie Walker, 261 Walker, Moab, UT 84532, (435) 259-7661; e-mail: redrock@lasal.net.

12-13--ANTIOCH, CA: 44th annual show, "Treasures of the Earth-2002"; Antioch Lapidary Club; Contra Costa Fairgrounds, Flower Building, 10th St. and L St.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; exhibits, dealers, demonstrations, silent auction, hourly door prizes, local petrified wood, gems, minerals, fossils, crystals, rocks, slabs, beads, jewelry, repairs, supplies, books, tools, equipment; contact Dave Zabaldano, (925) 516-0651; e-mail: davez@cctrapp.com.

12-13--MARYSVILLE, WA: 28th annual show, "Rocktoberfest"; Marysville Rock & Gem Club; Marysville Junior High School cafeteria, 7th St. at State St.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; dealers, demonstrations, club sales, silent auction, children's activities, raffle, grab bags, door prizes, spin-the-wheel; contact Rocky McCall, 8330 272nd St. NW, Satanwood, WA 98292-7430, (360) 629-2515; e-mail: rocky@greatnorthern.net.

12-13--TRONA, CA: 61st annual show; Searles Lake Gem & Mineral Society; Lapidary and Show Building; Sat. 8-5, Sun. 8-4; three different field trips to collect saline minerals from Searles Dry Lake; on the largest trip, visitors will see tons of specimens gushing up from 45 feet below the hard salt surface; on another trip, visitors can dig through 100 tons of sticky, black mud to find large specimens of lake minerals; on the third

trip, visitors can collect Searles Lake pink halite; IMC Chemicals, the business that extracts minerals from the lake, will conduct free bus tours of its three large chemical plants; information provided for self-guided trips to Trona Pinnacles National Natural Area; displays, dealers, demonstrations, geode cutting and sales; children's activities, videos, food, dry camping; contact Bonnie Fairchild, 84830 12th St., Trona, CA 93562, (760) 372-5356; Web site: www1.iwvisp.com/tronagemclub/.

12-13--TUKWILA, WA: 26th annual show; National Opal Association; Tukwila Community Center, 12424 42nd Ave. S; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; admission \$3; dealers, demonstrations, exhibits; contact Gerry Alexander, (360) 876-4543.

18-20--SALT LAKE CITY, UT: Show; Wasatch Gem Society; Fairpark, Promontory Hall, North Temple and 10th West; Fri. 10-8, Sat. 10-8, Sun. 10-5; admission \$2 donation, kids free, uniformed Scouts and Scout leaders free; dealers, demonstrations, specimens, showcases, slabs, tools, silent auction, wheel of fortune, grab bags, door prizes (tickets are \$1; Sat. prize is handmade queen-sized quilt; Sun. prize is Genie cab machine with many attachments); contact Jim Record, (801) 254-0125.

18-20--SANTA ROSA, CA: Show; Gem Faire; Sonoma County Fairgrounds, 1350 Bennett Valley Rd.; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-7, Sun. 10-5; weekend pass \$5; contact Allen Van Volkinburgh, (760) 747-9215; Web site: www.gemfaire.com.

19-20--EL CAJON, CA: Show; El Cajon Gem & Mineral Society; Masonic Hall, 695 Ballantyne St.; no other information provided.

19-20--WHITTIER, CA: 53rd annual show, "Rocks in Our Back Yard"; Whittier Gem and Mineral Society; Whittier Community Center, 7630 WA Ave.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission; contact Jay Valle, (626) 934-9764.

25-27--DEL MAR, CA: Show; Gem Faire; Del Mar Fairgrounds, 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd.; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-7, Sun. 10-5; weekend pass \$5; contact Allen Van Volkinburgh, (760) 747-9215; Web site: www.gemfaire.com.

26-27--BELLEVUE, WA: Show, "Octoberfest of Gems"; Bellevue Rock Club; Vasa Park, 3560 W. Lake Sammamish Parkway SE; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission; dealers, demonstrations, food; contact Bruce Himko, P.O. Box 1851, Bellevue, WA 98009-1851, (425) 957-1284; e-mail: brucebecky@msn.com; Web site: www.geocities.com/bellevue_rock_club/.

26-27--CUYAHOGA FALLS, OH: Show, "Gemboree"; Summit Lapidary Club and Akron Mineral Society; Emidio & Sons Expo Center, 48 E. Bath Rd.; Sat. 10-7, Sun. 10-6; adult admission \$3, students \$2, seniors \$2, children \$2; contact Wendy McCormac, 923 Barnes Ave., Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221, (330) 945-7858; e-mail: wendyted@core.com.

NOVEMBER

2-3--ANAHEIM, CA: 35th annual show, "Opals of the World"; American Opal Society; Quality Hotel Maingate, 616 Convention Way; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$3.50, seniors \$3, students \$1.50, children under 12 free, parking \$1; rough and cut opals, gemstones, jewelry, books, supplies, opal and gem dealers from Australia and U.S.; seminars on opal jewelry design and opal mining, door prizes, grand raffle with many prizes; contact Bob Dixon, P.O. Box 4875, Garden Grove, CA 92842, (714) 525-7635; e-mail: javcarey@gte.net.

19-20--POUGHKEEPSIE, NY: 33rd annual show, "The Many Varieties of Quartz"; Mid-Hudson Valley Gem & Mineral Society; Mid-Hudson Civic Center, 14 Civic Center Plaza; Sat. 11-6, Sun. 10-5; admission \$5, seniors \$4, students \$4, children under 12 free; gemstones, minerals, jewelry, beads, fossils, fluorescent minerals, lapidary rough, tools, books, demonstrations, exhibits, 30 dealers, six free minerals for kids, hourly door prizes, grand prize of large Brazilian amethyst geode; contact Jack Rowland, (845) 297-3556; e-mail: heliodor@cutstones.com; Web site: geocities.com/nyrockhounds; directions to Civic Center: midhudsonciviccenter.com.

26--FAIRLESS HILLS, PA: 13th annual show, "Ultraviolation 2002"; sponsor not indicated; First United Methodist Church, 840 Trenton Rd.; Sat. 9-4; donation of \$2 is requested; fluorescent minerals are presented with alternating periods of darkness and light; sandwiches and beverages available; free fluorescent mineral for children; contact Larry Kennedy, 50 Windwood Rd., Lawrenceville, NJ 08648, (609) 882-6819; e-mail: uvrocks@mindspring.com.

19-20--SPRINGFIELD, MO: 35th annual show; Ozark Mountain Gem & Mineral Society; 625 E. St. Louis St.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; contact Floyd Carpenter, (417) 882-9296.

12-13--PAYSON, AZ: 6th annual show; Payson Rimstones Rock Club; Tonto Apache Mazatzal Recreation Center; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; admission \$3, children under 12 free with adult; contact Rick Prach, (928) 478-0250; e-mail: rprach@webtv.net.