

The Opal Express

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



**Volume #38 Issue #5
May 2005**

TO:

Some Topics In This Issue:

- More Pricing of Opal
- Updates - Opal Deposit in Wyoming
- Australian Opal Country, Pt 3
- Mineral Terms Quiz
- Refurbish Out Diamond Belts
- What to Do if You See a Fireball
- Dealers at Club Shows

Important Info:

Board Meeting
May 10th

General Meeting
May 12th

Lecture: Lothar Vallot on
"De-mystifying Gemology" or
Gemology Out of the Closet"

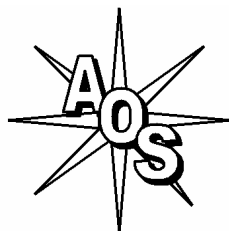
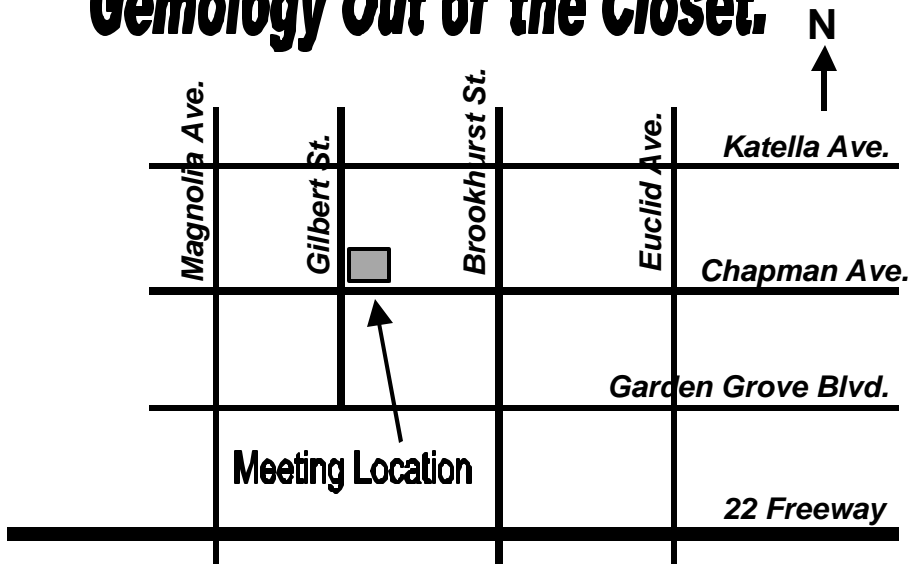
May 12th Lecture - Lothar Vallot on "Demystifying Gemology or Gemology Out of the Closet."

— GENERAL MEETINGS —

2nd Thursday of the Month
7:00 pm - 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



The American Opal Society

<http://OpalSociety.org>

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MEMBERSHIP ROSTER and NEWSLETTER MAILING: 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 E-Mail the Opal Express Newsletter instead of Postal Mail

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

Please sign here: _____ Date _____

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Editor-Jim Pisani

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Are Your Dues Due Now?

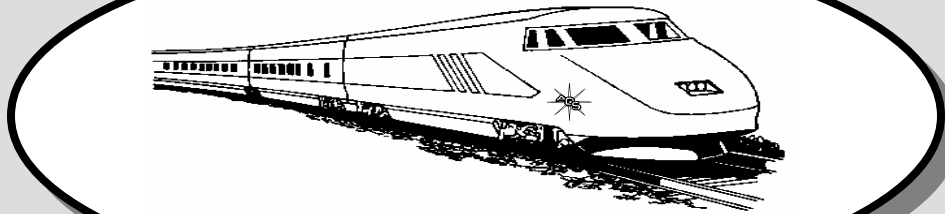
PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL. If your label shows the current month/year your dues are **DUE NOW**. If the date is older, your dues are overdue.

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

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Volume 38 Issue 5

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A Message from the President

By Dr. Walt Johnson

"De-mystifying Gemology or Gemology Out of the Closet" will be the topic of discussion for our May 12, 2005 meeting. The man who has kept gemology alive locally for the past twenty-five years will present it. It is Lothar Vallot, of Rancho Santiago College, the director of the G.I.A. program at that college. He not only will lecture, but also will bring an assortment of tools and equipment for all attending to have a hands-on experience examining gems. If you have ever wondered how a refractive index can tell one stone from another, THIS IS THE LECTURE NOT TO BE MISSED.

June 9, 2005 will be featuring Daniel Toledo, the creator of famous wildlife themed jewelry. Daniel is also a judge in the George M. Schultz Design Competition at the G.I.A. This will be another most informative meeting. Mark your calendar.

Your board of directors has been busy at Ball Jr. High School in Anaheim, setting the final wheels in motion for our workshop. Hopefully, classes will be starting in June. Plan on attending.

Members Only Website Password

To log onto the website's members only area at: http://opalsociety.org/aos_members_only_area.htm type: Name: "member" and Password: "spencer".

To have your Newsletter E-mailed to you...

About a third of the members are receiving their newsletter electronically. Thank you! You are helping offset printing costs of your Society! Getting your newsletter e-mailed is entirely voluntary. We will continue to mail by post as long as members request it.

There are a number of advantages of having an electronic copy of the newsletter. You can save paper by just viewing it electronically. Color photos and pictures can be viewed. A digital

copy never wears out and can be printed over and over again. Also, they are much easier to store. A CD could hold dozens of newsletters.

If you want it e-mailed, please send an e-mail to the editor, Jim Pisani, at webmaster@opalsociety.org. Please indicate your name and e-mail address that you want it mailed to.

Thanks,
Jim Pisani, Editor, American Opal Society

More Pricing of Opal

By Eugene LeVan VP

First rule is looking down on stone it must look good without any aids, just your eyes using natural light.

Brightness Level	Name	Description
1	Faint	Shows play of color only under direct sunlight and even then the fire is faint.
2	Dim	Shows some color under low light but even under indirect sunlight or the grading lamp the fire is dim.
2.5	Somewhat Bright	Shows better color with fire having a little more life than dim.
3	Bright	Shows fair color under low light and very nice fire under indirect sunlight or the grading lamp.
2.5	Quite Bright	Shows very nice color under low light, good color under indirect sunlight or the grading lamp.
3	Very Bright	Shows good color under low light and exceptional color under indirect sunlight or the grading lamp.
3.5	Extremely Bright	Shows very good color under low light and exceptional color under indirect sunlight or the grading lamp.
4	Brilliant	Shows exceptional bright crisp mirror-like color under indirect sunlight or the grading lamp and often shows even brighter in subdued light.

After you weigh your opal stone grading using the chart above, a price per level of brightness will give you guidelines to the value of your stone. For example: Brightness level of one could be \$25.00 per ct. while level five could be \$1,500 or higher per ct. There is more to follow next month on pricing using the Gem Appraisal Software (GAS) program. If you want a free program disk e-mail me at fineblackopal@sprynet.com.

Update on New Opal Deposit in Wyoming

By Steve Newstrom

A large, potentially commercial opal deposit has been identified by the Wyoming State Geological Survey, south of Riverton and east of Lander.

According to a press release by the Wyoming State Geological Survey dated 2/22/05 geologists with the Metal and Precious Stone Section at the WSGS have been investigating this gemstone deposit for the past two field seasons following up on a tip by a local rockhound. Work by Hausel and co-author Southerland (entitled Geology of the Cedar Rim opal deposit, Granite Mountains, central Wyoming) indicates that the deposit is dominated by giant resources of common opal, with some significant fire opal, but only traces of precious opal.

Numerous opals were collected by the WSGS including 3 opals weighing 11 pounds, 25 pounds and 34 pounds. The latter specimen is on display at the WSGS building in Laramie. According to the report, only a very small section of this large, extensive deposit has been examined to date, and additional work and/or company exploration on this deposit could potentially lead to the discovery of some hidden seams of precious opal.

The location of the deposit was released to the public on Friday March 4 at 11:00 AM and by March 13th, 51-600 ft by 1500 ft claims had been registered. The claim is centered in the Cedar Rim area of the old Wyoming jade fields in the Granite Mountains at Township 31 North, Range 95 West and is almost entirely within BLM land with only 1440 acres of state land.

At present road conditions are very bad with the BLM advising no travel in the area of the opal find.

For more information on the opal find contact W. Dan Hausel with the WSGS at 307-766-2286 x229 or e-mail dhausel@uwyo.edu. The altitude of the opal deposit area is around 7000 feet so dress warm.

Note 4/8/2005:

I have just come back from a 2 day field trip to the Wyoming opal deposit. It is a huge deposit of opal. Common opal just litters the ground over a 25 square mile area (this is just a guess...it may be slightly smaller or a lot larger). Opal colors that we found are brown, tan, gray and pink. Some of the opal displayed distinctive dendrites in a white semi translucent background. The opal we viewed was for the most part, severely fractured and without any "play of colors". But since the deposit of opal is so large there is always hope that more precious opal will be found. The nodules in which the opal occur are covered with a hard limestone/sandstone(?) shell. Some of the nodules have a stew-like interior mix of silica material, which appears to be chalcedony and opal. We found one sample with 2 distinct small Sweetwater Agate nodules inside of a much larger opal nodule. Explain that to me?! The Sweetwater Agate deposit is only a few miles away.

The nodules appear to have been eroded out of a soft sandstone like matrix. We found many large opal pieces (some weighing as much as 50 lbs) in an area where gas pipeline had been recently installed for a new gas well. I am guessing that the deposit was discovered when construction began for the pipeline. It is very interesting to note that if the sagebrush was exchanged for salt grass you could swear you were in Northern South Australia.

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Website: www.villagesmithyopals.com



Area where the gas pipe line had been buried showing opal nodules (with white skins) littering the ground.

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Additional Comments on Wyoming Opal

I found some additional comments on the new strike in Wyoming from the Rock Net Forum, <http://www.rockhounds.com/rocknet/>. I'll try to publish any new information I find on this important find.
The Editor

From Joe Anders - March 20, 2005

Email: stonejoe@cox.net

Subject: Wyoming opal

Any reports after the rush on the new deposit of opal in Wyoming?

From Ralph - March 22, 2005

Email: ginep@webtv.net

Wyoming opal is at present closed to public travel due to the BLM trying to protect a plant called the yellowhead. Opal deposit area is still open but the only way to get there is to walk.

From Ted - April 11, 2005

Email: tedpreston31@hotmail.com

I just spoke to a friend who recently spent some time hunting the new opal diggings. I had to chuckle when I read Ralph's reply, stating that the area was closed to public travel. Apparently the opal hunters here in Wyoming have a hard time getting out of their trucks and using their legs. My buddy said that there are claims staked everywhere along the road, but just a short walk away, up the hill and on top of the ridge, there are no stakes in sight. This is notable because the WSGS report makes clear that the formation capping that ridge contains most of the opal, so anyone who wants to stake a useful claim would stake it on top of the ridge instead of down the

hill along the road. The claims along the road will have only float material. If you stake a claim on the ridge top, you can dig down a bit, and find opal in place.

I walked over to the WSGS office here in Laramie last week to see the 50,000+ carat "opal" that started all this fuss. I had to conclude that this "opal rush" is a whole lot of hubbub over nothing. What the press releases all failed to mention is that the 50,000 carat opal they found is COMMON opal, not precious opal. There is no fire in it at all. They have a dozen or so cabochons in the display next to the rough, and they are decidedly ugly, even for common opal. White with yellow and black spots. And fractures. Lots of them. The press release mentioned that the WSGS had found traces of precious opal, but the 70,000 carat stone was not precious opal. Why the WSGS measures common opal in carats I have no idea. I cut a lot of common opal cabs, and everyone I buy it from sells the rough by the pound. I don't even make a fuss about the carat weight when I sell the finished cabs.

I'm sitting here looking at a sample of opal that my buddy brought back with him. It's black, with some white areas, and some tiny dendrites. He said he whacked it off of a huge chunk with a hammer, because the huge chunk was too large for three men to lift. (What they would want with a chunk of common opal that big I have no idea.) Let's see, a chunk too large to lift... I wonder how many carats that would be?

Sorry if I sound cynical. Smile, and be glad you're not wasting your time in the Wyoming opal fields! (If you ARE wasting your time there, smile anyway: If you learn to recognize rough jade, you may find something valuable out there!)

Ted

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Mineral Terms Quiz

Test Your Knowledge of Mineral Terms: Match the Term (on the left) with the Description (on the right)

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| 1 Adamantine | A | resistance to abrasion or scratching |
| 2 Alluvial | B | formed of slender bundles of fibers |
| 3 Amorphous | C | composed of closely packed grains |
| 4 Amygdaloid | D | almond-shaped cavity such as agate forms in |
| 5 Asterism | E | splitting in a definite plane |
| 6 Botryoidal | F | mineral shell filled with crystallized minerals |
| 7 Brittle | H | brilliant luster like that of a diamond |
| 8 Chatoyant | H | firmly united |
| 9 Cleavable | I | having definite crystal structure |
| 10 Compact | J | fracture surface covered with sharp points like that of cast iron |
| 11 Conchoidal | K | composed of crystals so tiny their form is invisible |
| 12 Conglomerate | L | star-like effect of rays of light on gem surface |
| 13 Crypto-crystalline | M | deposits made by running water |
| 14 Crystalline | N | shaped like a bunch of grapes |
| 15 Cubic | O | cube-like, applied to crystals |
| 16 Dendritic | P | crystalline igneous rock formed principally of quartz and feldspar |
| 17 Fibrous | Q | formed of thin layers or sheets |
| 18 Foliated | R | without crystal structure |
| 19 Fracture | S | reflecting light in pattern like that of a cat's eye |
| 20 Geode | T | appearance of broken face of mineral |
| 21 Gneiss | U | metamorphic laminated rock |
| 22 Granite | V | rock made up of worn fragments cemented together |
| 23 Granular | W | having tree-like patterns |
| 24 Hackly | X | fracture surface curved like that of a seashell |
| 25 Hardness | Y | easily fractured |

See Answers on Page 7.

From Quarry Quips, 11/2002, newsletter of the Wichita Gem & Mineral Society, via the 7/2003 Flatirons Facets

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A Field Trip to Australian Opal Country, Part 3 or An American Opalholc in Paradise

By Margaret Malm

This is part 3 of 4 of Margaret Malm's travel log while touring the opal fields of Australia with AOS member Barbara McCondra's tour group. It was written for The Lapidary Digest, a defunct Internet discussion forum, Edited and Published by Hale Sweeny (hale2@mindspring.com). This excerpt is from Issues No. 276-279, 5/21/2000 - 1/13/2001. The Editor

Sigh. Time to, regretfully, leave Yowah and head for the coast and the end of the trip. Our little caravan steamed out of Yowah early in the morning; Michael in the lead, since he has a 'roo bar on his "Ute" (a 'roo bar is just like the "Bull Bars" you see on some of the pickup trucks in the western US); the rest of us following in our van. Two leaders, six happy but saddened (to have to leave) participants, and a kangaroo in a laundry bag! A little Joey named "Outback". I told you last time about how Outback came to be with us. Since this was, admittedly, a bit off subject, I don't want to take up more space (and probably bore most of you) with word of his fate. But when I get home I will write a little story about it on my computer, and if you are interested just send me an e-mail sometime after about June 5 and I'll send you a copy.

Our first day's journey was back to Lightning Ridge. We made several stops, one of which was at a farm where they grow dates, and make date wine. As we pulled in there, we saw some familiar-looking (OPAL!) rocks sitting outside, and a few Ooh's and Ahh's were heard. Then Dick's measured sepulchral tones were heard from the back of the van, like the Voice of Doom: "We don't need any more!", which really cracked us up; we were all struggling under the weight of lots of "trophies", and wondering how we were going to cope with the airlines' weight allowances. We stopped at a park and saw a Koala high up in a tree; almost invisible. We pulled into Lightning Ridge late, as when the shadows get long you have to travel quite slowly to avoid a serious encounter with the 'roos, who become active from then until around 9:00 the next morning. Most people try to be home by about 5pm, and travel at night only when it is very urgent.

We stayed there overnight and then headed on coastward. The real "Outback", now very green and pretty because of all the rains, soon began to look a bit more civilized. Big cotton fields and the occasional cotton gin. Large "Stations" which seemed to be growing more cattle than sheep. And as we neared the coast, big fields of sugar cane; and they also grow Macadamias and avocados. Would you believe avocados 6 for \$1? And that's about 60 cents, our money.

Then on to Inverell, a sapphire-mining area. Marilyn was especially interested in going there, as she is a faceter and wanted to find some good faceting rough. And we had planned on doing a couple of hours of screening ourselves. However, we found that was no longer possible. The local rockhounds (their club is right next to the tourist center) were all off at a big show at Lismore. But it seems that there are several problems. First the (public) "fossicking" areas are all played out; and all the good places are in the hands of a large corporation and closed. And the miners have sort of gone on strike. Seems the buyers (usually Thais) were demanding to pick and choose only the best sapphires, rather than buying them in lots as is the usual practice (necessary in order to be able to also sell the less good ones); so the miners had gone back to farming until they could find buyers who were willing to buy in lots.

There were, however, several places there, including the Visitor Center that had some very nice faceted ones (although not the yellow ones Marilyn wanted); most were multis, and some nice blues. I bought a few that had especially nice sparkle, as I'm not all that particular as to color.

The Gem Centre also had a little rough (as well as faceted stones), and Marilyn was able to find some rough that suited her needs. She and Dick also bought a large bag of gravel to screen.

Then up over the Great Dividing Range and down to Grafton and the coastal area. Stopped there for the night; I felt right at home, as there is a ghost town named Grafton only a few miles from where I live in Silver Reef.

We stopped in Ballina for petrol, etc, and I went into Ballina Opals and Gems. They had some very nice triplets (the first I'd found; you don't often find doublets or triplets anywhere in Australia). The lady in the store was a rockhound, and very interested to hear about LapDigest and said she was going to subscribe. Welcome, "Rockhound", if you are reading this!

We stopped in the coastal resort town of Byron for lunch and a look-around. There was an opal shop that Barbara had suggested we visit; it is owned by a miner she knows from Lightning Ridge, and we were able to get some idea how the price skyrockets as you get away from the field. Looked like a factor of at least 10 times. Remember that I told you about June digging out a bit of potch in the mine at Lightning Ridge that turned out to be a \$2000.00 red-on-black opal that she then bought from them? She had been carrying it next to her heart in her 27-pocketed vest. She was persuaded to bring it out and show it to Tony (the miner); he looked at it carefully, said "beautiful!" and "very well cut, but cut rather expensive" and then - - offered her \$15,000.00 for it! Nothing like that to put you into a real cold sweat! (She didn't sell it). We continued on to the resort town of "Surfers Paradise" south of Brisbane. We had a little time to explore, and Dick and Marilyn found a faucet near the beach, up on a little platform, and I found a piece of bark from a tree for a trough, and they sluiced their sapphire gravel. They found several sapphires, but Marilyn said they all would have to be "treated", and weren't really worth the cost of that.

Then on to Brisbane, and the end of our "tour". Ron came around and helped us all with advice on our customs declarations. We all flew down to Sydney to spend a couple of days, and go our separate ways. I'm now up at a friend's home in Mt Isa, where the largest underground lead mine in Australia (and possibly the world??) is located. I will also make a write-up, when I get home, about this mine and the area; available to anyone interested by sending me an e-mail sometime after June 5.

And I will send you one more report, including the visit with Len Cram I promised earlier, and some odds and ends. Meanwhile, G'day, Mate!

Margaret Malm kadok@redrock.net

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Refurbish Your Worn Out Diamond Belts

By Steve Newstrom

I just hate to throw away perfectly good diamond sanding belts with no useable abrasive. The belt integrity seems fine but the diamond abrasive is gone. With diamond powder being so inexpensive, I thought with a little ingenuity, I could make a good working belt out of an old worn out belt. And I did! I believe this procedure would work for Nova wheels as well.

Enough bragging...let's get down to it...I clean the belt thoroughly with acetone. Read the warnings on the acetone can... it is dangerous stuff. Place the belt over an old expanding drum or grinding wheel (just to give it a solid backing) and suspend on a dowel between two stacks of books or boxes so the belt/wheel hangs free and can be rotated easily by hand.

I use Hughes Epoxy 220 made by Hughes Associates out of Wayzata MN. The epoxy hardens without being brittle and mixes well with the diamond powder. I use the small plastic measuring cups for liquid medication doses that are available in drug stores. Mix a total of 1teaspoonful equal amounts of hardener and resin in the small cup. Then I dump in a 5 carat vial of the appropriate grade

of diamond powder and mix thoroughly again. This is not "5 Minute Epoxy" so you have plenty of time to mix.

Apply the epoxy/diamond mixture to the belt smoothly using the disposable acid flux brushes pictured below. Apply in a thin coat so there are no lumps or thick areas. The epoxy sets up in one hour (hardens in 8 hrs) so you must keep rotating the belt every few minutes to keep mixture from running on the belt. A heat lamp or warm desk lamp greatly reduces hardening times. One teaspoon (and 5 carats diamond) is enough for 1-6" X 2" belt. I usually have a little left over. I would toss the used brushes so you don't cross contaminate although they can be cleaned with acetone and reused for the same grits or coarser.



I just finished a 600 grit belt and it cuts faster than a new factory belt.

Note: Even if a thick coat is applied uniformly it tends to run, giving you a bumpy belt (even though they are certainly still useable...I have a bumpy belt that has been used for several years and is finally beginning to smooth out as the diamond wears off). I would try 2 thin coats (1/2 the diamond powder per coat) rather than 1 thick coat to give your wheel extended life.

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What to Do if You See a Fireball

A "fireball" meteor is a rare and significant event, and if you are a witness to one, concentrate on the whole phenomena for as long as it takes. Some things will occur simultaneously (over a short amount of time: light, sound, and changes in direction). Try to take it all in, and use the following ten steps to help you recall the fireball so it can be located by researchers looking for meteorites on the ground.

- Keep your eye on the ball of light and associated phenomena, and count slowly (1, 2, 3, etc.) until it disappears.
- Note time of day.
- Listen carefully for any sounds at the same time as the light and up to two or three minutes later.
- Notice landmarks, buildings, poles, fences, trees, etc., below where you first saw the fireball and where you last saw the fireball.

- Notice the height above the horizon where you first see it and last see it. (You can use landmarks for this too.)
- Pay attention to the end: Did it fade out, blink out, fragment, explode - and - what about pieces falling off? Try to keep a mental/visual image of the event (was it shadowed, color, light intensity, flickering and end).
- Watch for a smoke or dust trail after the fireball: Was there a smoke trail after falling pieces ... after the fireball?
- If you are under the fireball listen for falling objects, even small marble or hail like pieces, or where larger pieces may have hit and could be buried in the ground.

After the event ends:

- Memorize your exact location so you can return with a field researcher. (Write down notes and a sketch of what you saw with landmarks noted.)
- If you have a compass, take a bearing and plot your location on a map. If you have a GPS receiver, take a latitude and longitude reading. Directions of first and last sightings and the first and last angles above the horizon are very important. For field researchers, this is the best way to locate the flight path and end position of the fireball; therefore any compass bearings you take become very important information.

If you think it is a significant event, you may want to report it on the Internet. This will allow researchers to use your position and observations to triangulate and locate the longitude and latitude of where the fireball breaks up in the sky and ultimately, to describe a potential impact area on the ground where meteorites might be found.

To report a "Fireball" sighting: Write down as much information as possible, based on the above questions, and mail to:

Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County
900 Exposition Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90007

Or call and leave your name and telephone number: (213) 763-

DINO

From *The Gates Rockhound Bulletin*, June-July-August, 2002, via the 3/2003 *Flatiron Facet*

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Mineral Terms Quiz Answers

1-G, 2-M, 3-R, 4-D, 5-L, 6-N, 7-Y, 8-S, 9-E, 10-H, 11-X, 12-V, 13-K, 14-I, 15-O, 16-W, 17-B, 18-Q, 19-T, 20-F, 21-U, 22-P, 23-C, 24-J, 25-A

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Dealers at Club Booths

Here are some interesting and sobering views of club shows from a dealer's perspective, courtesy of the Lapidary Arts and Faceters Digest. It's some food for thought given our upcoming show in November.

The Editor

From: Don Rogers <Don@Campbell-gemstones.com>

Date: Thu, 14 Apr 2005

"Our expenses for this 2 day show were over \$5,000 and a 3 table dealer booth cost \$235. The dealers were and have been the major financial beneficiaries of the show for years. Over 70 volunteers spent 3 days hauling, skirting tables, setting up cases, putting in exhibits, demonstrating, and staffing this event. Add to this the hundreds of hours spent on preparation leading up to the show. Is it any wonder that club shows are going the way of the dinosaurs?"

Wayne, from and EX dealer. let me give you another view of the problem.

While your \$235 is extraordinarily cheap for today's shows, that is not the issue. While you complain about \$5000 expensed for the

show, what are your dealer expenses? My last show was in San Diego at the Gem Fare. That location was one of my best shows. I had to travel 400 miles each way to get to the show, and then there was the travel from a motel to the show. Meals every day in a restaurant. Now, we traveled in the day before setup. A day on the road coming and going is five days. I couldn't cover my both 100% without help, so I had to hire someone to help. Usually this is a buddy that is also a dealer, so you give him some space (less room for your inventory) and pay his motel for the four nights you are there. Lets see, 4 x 2 @ \$80, is \$640. That's if we are staying at the Motel 6.

I refuse to eat McDonald's three meals a day. I don't eat like that at home, I don't eat like that on the road. So, my meals cost around me around \$200 for the trip, two days on the road, and four at the show. However, there are two of us, either me and my wife if she takes time off work, or me and my helper. Meals are now \$400.

If you take the mileage, \$0.35 a mile is what the IRS allows. It cost more. So, 400 down, 400 back and a 200 commute at the show, is a 1000 miles Times 0.35 (last years allowance) \$350 in travel expense.

As it stands now, me, the guy with a 15 ft booth, but at your prices of \$235 is now out at least \$1390 before we start adding inventory and display cost. So, if I add in the cost of my displays, credit card expensed, Pilfered inventory, well, the expense list is longer.

My own expenses are getting close to 1/3 or more of the clubs. And, I'm only one of 40 or 50, or even 100 dealers with like or greater expenses.

So, now, I make a killer sale, say a \$5000 stone. My cost for the stone was \$2000, Nice profit. Really? My profit was \$3000. Less \$640 for motels, Less \$400 for meals, Less \$350 travel expenses, Less \$235 for the booth, and what was my real profit for the stone. \$1625. Except, to get that one stone in stock, I had to invest well over \$200,000 to get the inventory on display. OK I sell a few more small stones, and after the Merchant fees, shoplifted goods, I may, on a really good show, make 2 or 3 hundred dollars gross. Not bad if you didn't consider I had to spend 10 times that amount to keep my inventory "fresh". Not bad for a weeks work is it???? Mickey D's is giving \$6.50 an hour. How does that compare? I spent 40 to 50 hours at the three day show, including set up an knock down, plus another 15 hours or so travel. So, 55 hours x \$6.50 is, ah, how much?? Bout the same as my \$200K investment got me isn't it.

At my last show, on Sunday afternoon at around 4:00, an hour from closing, I had \$375 sales. Not profit, but sales. All of the above expenses were there. I lost over a thousand dollars at that show.

The clubs generally look at their shows as a social event, or a museum display. At a club show, I would spend half of my time listening to club members telling me how they had a stone that was so much better than one of mine that they were looking at. A real customer would come up, and the club member would drive them away. Then they would want a big discount for something I had that they wanted.

Look, the dealers, "DEALERS", are there to make a profit first. Secondly, they attract attendees so your door fee helps you. They pay all of your expenses for the show, and you do not advertise, other than a 8x11 piece of paper on a post stuck on a stick on the side of IS5 saying next exit if you can get over five lanes.

If the clubs want to have a good show, they need to advertise, advertise, and advertise. They need to cull the dealers. "He has been doing our show for the last 30 years" but his stock is 30 years old and isn't attracting any new attendees or customers. They need to entice someone other than the wig salesman who will pay the space cost (my last three shows, and seeing some in Tucson two years back, the wig sales, cell phone sales, pottery, etc were close

to 25% of the show space). That doesn't attract customer to the dealers you are courting, in fact it drives them away.

So, bottom line, I have little empathy for the complaints of the clubs. They want to do things "like the always have" but times are different, quite different. They need to realize this and step up to the challenge. It worked before isn't the answer for today and really not the answer for tomorrow.

This has been a harsh assessment of club shows, but a realistic one. What worked five years ago will not work today. And five years ago, it wasn't working so good either.

If you want a good show, one that attracts a lot of people, and some of them will spend money with your dealers, so the dealers will come back next year, then you have to go after two things, First is the attraction, (not Billy Bob's collection of whale bones he found 40 years ago, but current interest, not yours, but the publics). Second is a culled set of dealers who will attract new customers, both for them and for the club. Stay focused on what the club is going to be promoting, not what it was.

Everybody complains about the Beadary Journal. Look at Tucson. Beads are selling. Slabs of jasper are not. My last trip, the big bead dealers had customers standing 10 deep. The slab dealers were filing their finger nails. Times are changing.

I have no skin in the game anymore. My last show was my last. I sold my cases, everything I could. I still have a bunch of inventory, but I'm not doing shows. Period. So, my comments should be taken as constructive criticism. I stand to gain or lose nothing if the shows don't change, or if they remain the same and die.

By the way, You talk about the time the "Over 70 volunteers spent 3 days", how many dealers are spending their life to be able to help you put on a show??? They expect a little help from the club, and you should expect a little help from them. It is a partnership. Both parties have to contribute. You as the club though need to lead. There are thousands of cell phone and wig dealers out there. Check any flea market. YOU need to put on a show that promotes the lapidary and mineral hobby/business. Not one that is a worn out black and white movie of what it was in the "good old days"

I've probably upset enough people for tonight, so with that, I'll say good night.

Don

Hi Don,

Thanks for a detailed look into the dealers end of shows. I agree that shows need new ideas and new life. Even though beads are not at all interesting for me the public seems to "eat them up". I wish I had been into lapidary in the "good old days". The ads in the old issues of Rock and Gem and Lapidary Journal almost make me cry because I missed out on a lot of things.
Thurmond

From: "Beth & Doug Dover" <ddover@carolina.rr.com>

I have been associated with our club show for about the last 10 years, so speak with some experience. I have seen the cost of putting on the shows climb rapidly and the small profit made by the club almost disappear. We are always looking for ways to increase the income from the show without raising table rentals every year. I KNOW that ours is by far the cheapest, as far as rental cost, of any show within 150 miles.

We do solicit dealer donations (only ONE) to raffle and we sell grab bags of minerals donated by club members. This has given us a grand total, including booth rentals, of almost a whopping \$600 annual profit. I donated a bucket of rocks from my personal collection to sell at the end of the club booth-money going to the club- for an astoundingly expensive \$0.50 each.

Two dealers came up and complained that if we were going to compete that they would not be back. I then defied either of them to

show me anything on either of their displays under \$10 and they could not. These rocks were being bought by kids along with the grab bags and were in no way a "competition" with the dealers there. I do sell a few rocks, but at shows like this always refer any inquiries to the dealers and never sell for myself. I see dealers bring the same tired old merchandise back year after year and complain that no one is buying anything! If they haven't bought it in the last 5 years, it will probably be on your table at the end of the season's shows too!

Clubs use these shows as a way to make money, folks!!! We cannot fund our activities if we do not have a profit. The show is our major fundraiser and we try to keep everyone happy. If a new dealer is allowed in the old ones cry about the competition. The people who come to the show lament the lack of variety in what is sold. Not everyone who comes to a gem & mineral show is looking for finished jewelry and thumbnails. Dealers have to understand that if the club does not make a profit the show will not be there for them to sell anything. They also need to look at what they have to sell when they lament that "I didn't even cover cost of set-up."

Doug Dover in sunny N.C.

Hi Doug, Thanks for the view of show promoters. It looks like from the comments of the dealer in the previous post that show promoters (clubs) and dealers need to talk more in show planning stages so each ones needs can be addressed and more closely met.

Thurmond

From <http://www.gemcutters.org/>, From *Lapidary Arts and Faceters Digest* lapidary@caprock-spur.com. "*Lapidary Arts and Faceters Digest*" <lapidary@caprock-spur.com>, Issue No. 337 - Monday, April 18, 2005

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May 2005 Gem & Mineral Shows

5-8 — FRANKLIN, NC: Annual retail and wholesale show, "Whistle Stop Gemfest" Whistle Stop Antique Mall; Whistle Stop Mall, Hwy. 441; Thu. 9-6, Fri. 9-6, Sat. 9-6, Sun. 10-5; free admission; jewelry, gems, minerals, rocks, specimens, knapping material; contact Chris or Nancy, (828) 369-6341.

6-8 — FRANKLIN, NC: 4th annual show, "Mother's Day Gemboree" Franklin Chamber of Commerce; Macon County Community Bldg.; 24 gem and mineral dealers, fine jewelry, rough and cut gemstones, minerals, fossils; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 12-5; adults \$2, children 12 and under free; contact Chamber of Commerce, (800) 336-7829.

6-8 — MARIETTA, GA: 37th annual show; GA Mineral Society; Cobb County Civic Center, 548 S. Marietta Pkwy., at Fairground St.; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 12-5; free admission; more than 30 dealers, gems, fossils, minerals, jewelry, door prizes, auction Sat. at 2; contact Jay Gorday, 1690 Granger Ct., Chamblee, GA 30341, (770) 986-0822; email: mayshow@gamineral.org; Web site: <http://gamineral.org/may-show.htm>.

6-8 — McPHERSON, KS: 13th annual rock swap; McPherson Gem & Mineral Club; 4-H Fairgrounds, Hickory and Woodside; free admission; dealers, door prizes; contact Marvin Lundquist, 441 N. Charles, McPherson, KS 67460, (620) 241-7003; e-mail: swederocker@mpks.net.

7-8 — ANAHEIM, CA: 46th annual show; Searchers Gem & Mineral Society; Brookhurst Community Center, 2271 W. Crescent Ave., at Brookhurst; Sat. 10-5:30, Sun. 10-5; free admission; contact GAMECO, 4141 Ball Rd. #373, Cypress, CA 90630; e-mail: hwmroch@gemandmineral.com; Web site: www.gemandmineral.com/searchers.html.

7-8 — BISHOP, CA: 2nd annual show; Lone Pine Gem & Mineral Society; Tri County Fairgrounds, Sierra St. and Fair St.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-4; free admission; in conjunction with Choo-Choo Swap Meet and Bishop Home Show; contact Jeff Lines, (760) 872-6597; e-mail: rockmun@hotmail.com.

7-8 — BOZEMAN, MT: 45th annual show; Gallatin County Fair Grounds, Black St. and Tamarack St.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4:30; gems, minerals, fossils, exhibits, silent auction, raffle, demonstrations; contact Dan Carter, (406) 586-4552, or Dick Wendel; e-mail: skihound@sbcglobal.net.

7-8 — EUGENE, OR: 54th annual show; Eugene Mineral Club; Lane County Fairgrounds, 13th and Jefferson; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; admission \$2; exhibits, demonstrations, youth activities, flint knapping, grand prize, raffle, club rock and used equipment sales, dealers with gold, silver, beads, minerals, fossils, crystals, gift items; contact Jack Clack, (541) 935-2727; e-mail: Jcdpc78@aol.com.

7-8 — GRAND JUNCTION, CO: 58th annual show, "Mesa County Barites" Grand Junction Gem & Mineral Club; Two Rivers Convention Center, 1st and Main; contact Gary and Pat Briels, 301 Kava Wy., Grand Junction, CO 81503, (970) 245-7925.

7-8 — LOGAN, UT: Show and sale; Cache Geological & Archeological Society; County Fairgrounds, 400 South 500 West; Sat. 10-7, Sun 10-5; free admission; contact Dave Denton, (208)-852-2293; e-mail: allenw@cc.usu.edu.

7-8 — RENO, NV: 39th annual show, "Jackpot of Gems" Reno Gem & Mineral Society; Reno Livestock Events Center, Exhibit Hall, 1350 N. Wells Ave.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; adults \$4, seniors and ages 12 to 18 \$3, ages 6 to 11 \$2; contact Jennifer Rhodes, (775) 356-8820.

7-8 — WALNUT CREEK, CA: Show; Crystal Fair; Civic Dr. at Broadway; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; contact Jerry Tomlinson, (415) 383-7837; e-mail: sfxtl@earthlink.net, Web site: www.crystalfair.com.

13-15 — COSTA MESA, CA: Spring show; Martin Zinn Expositions; Holiday Inn-Bristol Plaza, 3131 S. Bristol; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; free admission; 80 wholesale and retail dealers, minerals, fossils, gems, jewelry; contact Martin Zinn Expositions, Box 999, Evergreen, CO 80437, (303) 674-2713; e-mail: mz0955@aol.com.

14-15 — CHEYENNE, WY: 6th annual show, "Capital City Gem & Mineral Festival" Cheyenne Mineral & Gem Society; Holiday Inn Cheyenne; Sat. 9-6, Sun. 10-4; contact Paul, (307) 634-6773; e-mail: pnmjam@msn.com.

14-15 — NEWBURY PARK, CA: 31st annual show, "Pageant of a Thousand Gems" Conejo Gem & Mineral Club; Borchard Park, 190 Re ino Rd.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission; exhibits, demonstrations, gem and jewelry sales, youth activities, door prizes, plant sales; contact Bob Stultz, (805) 498-4220; e-mail: cgamc@cgamc.org; Web site: www.cgamc.org.

20-22 — GRAPEVINE (DALLAS), TX: Show; The Bead Renaissance Shows; Grapevine Convention Center, 1209 S. Main St.; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; free admission; retail and wholesale, ancient, vintage, contemporary, and designer beads, buttons, jewelry, tools, books; contact

J&J Promotions LLC, P.O. Box 420, Williamsburg, NM 87942, (505) 894-1293; e-mail: info@beadshow.com; Web site: www.beadshow.com.

14-15 — YUCAIPA, CA: Yucaipa Valley Gem & Mineral Society; Yucaipa Community Center, 34900 Oak Glen Rd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; free admission; 14 vendors, rough material, beads, gems, jewelry, mineral specimens, lapidary tools, mineral and gem displays, silent auctions, lapidary demonstrations, more than 150 prize drawings; contact Lee Peterson, (909) 794-0731; e-mail: res09ayd@verizon.net.

20-21 — ANDERSON, CA: Show; Superior CA Gem & Mineral Association; Shasta County Fairgrounds, five miles south of Redding; contact Steve Puderbaugh, (530) 365-4000.

21-22 — HERMISTON, OR: Annual show, "Nature's Treasures Under Foot" Hatrockhounds; Umatilla County Fairgrounds, Cooper Hall; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; contact Jaunita Ross, (541) 567-2542.

21-22 — SALIDA, CO: Commercial-retail show; Dave Zarecor; Heart of the Rockies Campground, 16105 W. U.S. Hwy. 50; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-5; trading and selling, gems, fossils, minerals; contact Mike Collins, 7528 U.S. Hwy. 50, Howard, CO 81233, (719) 942-4559; e-mail: mcollins@amigo.net.

28-29 — LAKESIDE, AZ: 11th annual show; White Mountain Gem & Mineral Club; Blue Ridge Jr. High School; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-5; admission \$1; contact Tonie MonDragon, (928) 537-8855. bbaker160@cogeco.ca.



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