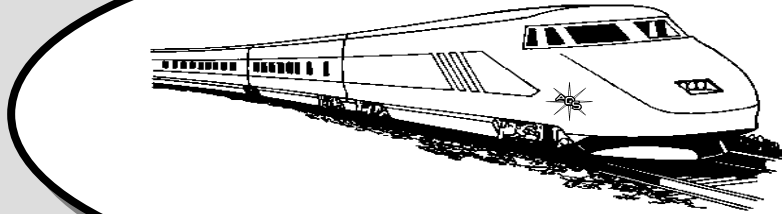


# The Opal Express

Published monthly by  
The  
American  
Opal  
Society



October 2009

Volume 42 Issue 10

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## Presidents Message

*By Jim Lambert*

Wow, we really had some great speakers at our past two meetings. Our own LaVerne Christenson and Jim Pisani were absolutely fantastic. Shirley gave a "How To" presentation on making silver jewelry out of clay. Actually, she is a certified instructor on using a product called "Silver Clay Metal". She made the whole process look so simple that even a Cave Man could do it.

Jim's PowerPoint presentation on Tecopa Opal was very interesting and informative. Tecopa is not that far away and could easily become a short drive weekend trip. He also provided some great samples (some found by his wife and son).

A great big THANK YOU to both for sharing their experience and knowledge. This month we are proud to have David Burton speak at our meeting. He has been involved with Opal and the Jewelry Industry since before dirt was created. If you have never heard David give a presentation, you have really missed something special. Don't miss this month's meeting - see you there.

## Starfire Opal Mine, Gabbs Nevada

From <http://forums.ghosttowns.com> 6/13/2004 - 6/24/2004

**From Trishe** - Does anyone have the directions to the Starfire Opal Mine near Gabbs, Nevada. I think it is near Mount Anne. Also is it currently in operation?

**From Fred Rovetti** - Camped at the mine last October for a week while searching for petrified wood. I have visited this abandoned mine on many occasions over the last 15 years. BLM came in way back when and flattened the remains of any structure that had been there and the dry wash to the mine itself is impassible for the last 1000 yards or so. I have never put the odometer to work getting to this place but will do so the first week of October this year and tell you the exact route.

**It's Almost Here!**  
**Mark your Calendar!**  
**The American Opal Society's 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual**  
**OPAL & GEM SHOW**  
**The Largest Opal Show in USA!**  
**Sat. Nov. 7, 2009 - 10AM - 6PM**  
**Sun. Nov 8, 2009 - 10 AM - 5PM**  
**Opal and Gem Dealers** from the USA and Australia.  
**Rough and Cut Opals:** gemstones; jewelry & supplies.  
**Huge Raffle** many prizes of gemstones, jewelry, tools, etc.  
**Free Opal Seminars** on Saturday with Paid Admission.  
**Free Demonstrations** on gem cutting, jewelry making, etc.

**Brand New Location!**  
**White House / West Wing Event Center**  
**1238 S. Beach Blvd.**  
**Anaheim, CA 92804**  
<http://whitehouseeventcenter.com>  
**Located at Hobby City**  
**Contact Info: Gene LeVan**  
(562) 621-1805, e-mail: [finelblackopal@sprynet.com](mailto:finelblackopal@sprynet.com)  
**Jay Carey**  
Phone: (714) 525-7635, e-mail: [iavcarev@charter.net](mailto:iavcarev@charter.net)

Basically the route as follows: Take Highway 50 east out of Fallon, Nevada, to Highway 261 or 361 I can't remember exactly, but it is the only paved right turn at the old Middlegate Station that heads down to Gabbs, Nev. approximately 30 miles south. At mile post 22 I believe (I will confirm this in Oct.), turn right onto a dirt road that heads west and then goes around a bend and heads southwest for several miles until you cross a fence the only fence line you will see. Continue on for a ways until the dirt road forks. Take the right fork and follow that road until it ends in a dry wash. Turn right and head up the wash, avoiding the large boulders until you can't drive any further. You should be able to see the tailings from that point and it's an easy walk from there.

The opal is seam opal only and the area has been extensively bulldozed. The opal itself actually leans more towards an agate, pure white in color with flashes of red, blue, and green in the very hard to find pieces with color. If I were to be looking just for opal I would not spend any time here at all, but would pay the fees & dig up at the Wilson's Royal Peacock Opal Mine in Virgin Valley. Hope this helps and hope this gets to you. Any questions about the Gabbs area in general don't hesitate to ask.

**Caveat – Please Check to make sure no claims have been made since the article date before you dig here – The Editor**

## Members Only Website Password

To log onto the website's members only area at: [http://opalsociety.org/aos\\_members\\_only\\_area.htm](http://opalsociety.org/aos_members_only_area.htm) type: Name: "member" and Password: "america".

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## The "Glorious Jubilee" Largest Black Opal in the World

By Mike Leverett  
March 20, 2009

A few months ago I was fortunate enough to meet the owner of



*The Glorious Jubilee*

the largest Black Opal that is in existence today. At 755 carats, the "GLORIOUS JUBILEE" is truly an amazing stone.

It's the largest super sized Lightning Ridge Black Opal I have ever heard of or seen. This Black Opal was found many years ago by a miner at the Lightning Ridge Opal Field in Australia. The opal miner, a few years ago, finally decided to sell it to the gentleman I met.

Someday this gem will be remembered like the Famous "Hope Diamond" for its uniqueness and rarity. The Opal is one piece with thickness up to 14 mm, longest point 106, and widest point 84.5 mm.

The recommended wholesale value is US \$4,000.00 per carat with a total current wholesale value of \$3,020,000.

This gemstone has almost every color of the rainbow, changing shades from purple, to blue, to vivid blue green, with lemon, orange and red. From every angle, with even the slightest movement, the variety of color and pattern changes.

It is truly an amazing gemstone recognized worldwide for its outstanding uniqueness and this is the only natural gemstone that was ever found that from a specific angle has a clearly visible picture of Mt. Fuji, with red hot lava flowing down the sides.

Well I guess if you have an October birthday, like my mother or good friend Jenifer Jeffers, then it's gotta go on the "must have" list right? Anyway, thought that was truly an amazing thing to see and thought you all may like to see and hear about it as well.

From <http://mikeleverett.com>

***I'm not sure it's the largest black opal in the world and I'm not sure it is even a black, but it sure is a nice opal!*** - The Editor

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## Rare 472-Carat Emerald Comes to Santa Ana

The emerald, worth more than \$3 million, is on display at Bowers Museum.

By Doug Irving  
The Orange County Register

SANTA ANA – A 472-carat emerald crystal, considered one of the finest in the world and once described as the stuff of legend, has gone on display at the Bowers Museum.

The emerald is called El Itoco, after a river that flows through



*Bowers President Peter Keller examines the 463-carat "El Itoco" Emerald through a glass display case at its temporary Bowers Museum home.*

JOSHUA SUDOCK, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

the region of Colombia where it was recently discovered. It's an uncut bolt of green light, about four inches long, glassy clear at one end and flecked with natural impurities at the other.

Some estimates have pegged its value at more than \$3 million. But it arrived at the Bowers Museum late last week in a leather pouch tied around the neck of a courier, to avoid attention.

"It's one of the finest existing emerald crystals in the world today," said Museum President Peter Keller, himself a gemologist. His first thought on seeing the emerald: "I can't believe it's real."

The emerald was dug from the black shale of a renowned Colombian mining region in August 2008. It's not the biggest emerald ever found; one emerald crystal once weighed in at more than 1,750 carats, although its whereabouts are now unknown.

What sets El Itoco apart is its quality – so clear at one end that a light beneath it shines through bright green. "Pieces of this size and quality are the stuff of legends," a curator for the Gemological Institute of America said of El Itoco in a prepared statement earlier



*The 463-carat "El Itoco" Emerald, mined in Colombia, is on temporary loan to the Bowers Museum in Santa Ana. The 4-inch long crystal, who some suggest could be valued at more than \$3 million, will be on display through December 2009.*

JOSHUA SUDOCK, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

this year. "It generates what Colombian miners call 'green fever' in the imagination."

But to a trained eye, it's those impurities at the base of the emerald – tiny pieces of black shale locked within the crystal – that say this is the real deal. A synthetic emerald – and there are plenty out there – doesn't have the same telltale impurities, drawn over eons from the rock where the emerald formed.

The arrival of the El Itoco emerald at the Bowers Museum coincides with the opening of a new exhibit there, which features the work of Colombian artist Fernando Botero. His work touched on religion, politics and history, according to the museum; but he is best known for his fleshy, rounded figures.

The emerald will stay on display at the Bowers until the end of the Botero exhibit in early December. It and the exhibit are included in the price of admission, which is \$12 for adults. Go to [www.bowers.org](http://www.bowers.org) for more information.

The emerald is in a small room near the front desk. Keller declined to speak in any detail about the level of security in place to keep it there. "It's very high," he said. "I can't get into that, but it's very high."

Contact the writer: 714-704-3777 or [dirving@ocregister.com](mailto:dirving@ocregister.com)  
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**500-Carat Diamond Found at South African Mine**

**Chicken-egg-sized stone may be among world's top 20 high-quality gems**

*Associated Press, Sept. 29, 2009 - JOHANNESBURG*

Petra Diamonds Ltd. says a diamond the size of a chicken egg has been found at South Africa's Cullinan mine.

The diamond may be among the world's top 20 high-quality gems. It was discovered Thursday at the mine northeast of Pretoria, South Africa.

Johan Dippenaar, the company's chief executive, said in a statement Tuesday that the 507.55-carat gem was of "exceptional color and clarity."

No value has been given yet for the diamond, which weighs just over 100 grams.

The mine also produced the largest diamond ever found, the Cullinan, at 3,106 carats in the rough. That finished stone is set in Britain's Imperial Scepter as part of the Crown Jewels.

From <http://msnbc.msn.com>  
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*Petra Diamonds Chief Executive Johan Dippenaar holds a white diamond weighing 507.55 carats, which was excavated at the historic Cullinan mine in South Africa on Sept. 24, 2009.*

**Famed and Feared Hope Diamond Goes Naked**

*AP – The Hope Diamond is displayed for the first time as a stand-alone gem, with no setting at all for exhibit ...*

*By Randolph E. Schmid, Associated Press Writer*

*Sept. 23, 2009*

WASHINGTON – For the first time, the famed and feared Hope Diamond is on display au naturel.

The doors were locked.

Tense looking security guards took their positions.

In rolled a cart, a white cloth covering its contents.

Smithsonian Institution officials lifted the cloth. "The Hope Diamond naked," proclaimed

Jeffrey Post, curator of the National Gem Collection.

The world's largest blue diamond went on public display Wednesday, for the first time without its ornate setting.

Perched atop a light gray display post, the 45.5-carat, walnut-size diamond will be on view by itself for several months while a new setting is prepared.

Called "Embracing Hope," the new setting will surround the star gem in a ribbon of white diamonds. It was chosen from three proposals in an online vote, winning 45,000 out of a total 110,000 votes cast, said Cristian Samper, director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History.

The new display is part of a celebration of the Hope Diamond's half-century at the museum. It was donated in 1958 by jeweler Harry Winston, whose firm is preparing the new setting.

Long rumored to carry a curse, the diamond has brought the museum "nothing but good luck," said Post, noting that it inspired many other gifts and forms the basis of the National Gem Collection.

That was Winston's plan, he added, noting that the jeweler once commented that even though the United States doesn't have a king or queen, it should have crown jewels.

Previously the Hope Diamond has been shown in a platinum setting, surrounded by 16 white pear-shaped and cushion-cut diamonds, suspended from a chain containing



*Russ Feather, left, Museum Specialist Gemologist, and Kelly Carnes from Public Affairs Office, unveil the Hope Diamond at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History Washington, Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2009. The Hope Diamond will be displayed for the first time as a stand-alone gem, with no setting at all for exhibit.*



*The 45.52-carat Hope Diamond is displayed for the first time ever with no setting to mark the 50th anniversary of its acquisition, at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History in Washington September 23, 2009.*



forty-five diamonds. The Hope will return to this original setting in late 2010.

Formed more than a billion years ago, the diamond was mined in India and later is believed to have been part of the French crown jewels, having been stolen during the French Revolution. It later came into the possession of Henry Philip Hope, whose name it carries.

Its blue color comes from the element boron included in the stone itself. Exposed to ultraviolet light, the Hope Diamond glows red-orange.

From [http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/us\\_naked\\_hope](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/us_naked_hope)

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## Leopard Opal – A New Type of Mexican Opal

*From the Ancient Mines of the Aztecs*

*Single Source Rare Variety of Opal*

Leopard Opal is a variety of opalized vesicular basalt or Matrix Opal where the vesicles in the basalt have been filled with precious opal showing a strong colour pattern. Leopard Opal is a term that was coined during its reintroduction to the world gemstone markets by R. T. Boyd Limited at the Tucson Gem & Mineral Show in 1996 (Gems & Gemology, Gem News, Spring 1996, pp 54-55). Prior to



*Leopard Opal*

1996 Leopard Opal was known to only a select few individuals and has not been commercially available to the world markets. In the mid 1960s Leopard Opal was sold as Basalt Opal with modest acceptance by the North American gem and mineral community. In Mexico it is erroneously referred to as Opalo Negro or Black Opal but is not at all like Australian Black Opal.

There is anecdotal and physical evidence in the academic literature that these Leopard Opal deposits had been worked in the State of Hidalgo in pre-Columbian times - possibly by the Aztecs.

In 2006 a comprehensive scientific article on Leopard Opal was written by Coenraads & Zenil (Gems & Gemology, Winter 2006, Vol XLII, pp. 236-246) that discussed the geology and mode of formation of the opals on the original discovery deposit in the State of Hidalgo in Mexico. Subsequent to this discovery in 1965 other occurrences and potentially economic deposits of Leopard Opal have been discovered and are presently being exploited in the same vicinity.

In 2008 R. T. Boyd Limited has become part-owner of the only known commercially producing Leopard Opal mine located in the State of Hidalgo in Mexico. This is a gemstone of significance because it occurs in substantial size blocks in volcanic rock making the Leopard Opal amenable to both polishing or faceting as well as suitable for gemstone carving and design work.

The Leopard Opal deposit is also associated with rarer quantities of high quality solid precious opal similar to the traditional Mexican and Australian opal.

From [http://tboydlimited.com/web/page.php?page=Leopard\\_Opal\\_-\\_New!!](http://tboydlimited.com/web/page.php?page=Leopard_Opal_-_New!!)

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## Quest for Fire at Opal Hill Mine

*By Dusty Rhoads*



*Entrance to the Opal Hill Mine*

Tucked deep into the Mule Mountains not far from Palo Verde lies Opal Hill Mine. Opal Hill is well known for its beautiful and rare fire agate, opal eggs and quartz crystals. When one thinks of a mine, images of deep shafts or dark tunnels usually come to mind. The Opal Hill Mine can be better described as a claim established on a hillside which overlooks a valley. The mine consists of rock outcroppings and holes where agate has been extracted.

Today, Opal Hill is actively producing fire agate, and rock hounders still frequent the mine for its gem-quality stones. The mine is privately owned but open to the public for a small collecting fee which is well worth it. With some hard work and effort, almost everyone leaves Opal Hill satisfied with the fiery agate they take with them.

I had never been to Opal Hill Mine, but had read about it in many articles and gem trail books. On a recent trip to Wiley Well I stopped by this old and famous mine to discover what treasures I could find.

When Cactus Jim and I arrived at Opal Hill, Howard and Nancy Hill greeted us with open-friendliness and made us feel right at home. They have lived at the mine for many years and have created a cozy homestead at the entrance to the mine.

Since we only stopped by for a brief visit and not dig, Howard gave us a short tour of the mine and an overview of what types of gemstones were commonly found at the mine. During the tour we stopped at a site where he was currently working on an agate-bearing vein.

Removing the fire agate from the surrounding rock takes some work with a sledge hammer, chisel and pick. Howard demonstrated



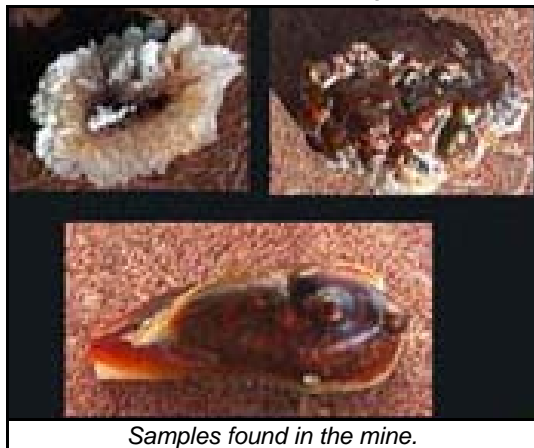
*Opal Egg Found at the Mine*



*A new pocket found at the mine.*

how to find an agate-filled vein and then gave us some helpful lessons on how to remove the agate from its resting place. He explained that agate is a type of quartz called cryptocrystalline, also referred to as chalcedony, which is formed from masses of fibrous or granular aggregates of [quartz](#). Agate is one of many varieties of chalcedony and can range in color from banded patterns to the rare fiery red.

Howard showed us colorful samples of fire agate which were found in the mine. The fire describes the red color of the stone. Once extracted, agate needs to be cut and polished or simply polished in its natural form to bring out the brilliant color. When the



Samples found in the mine.

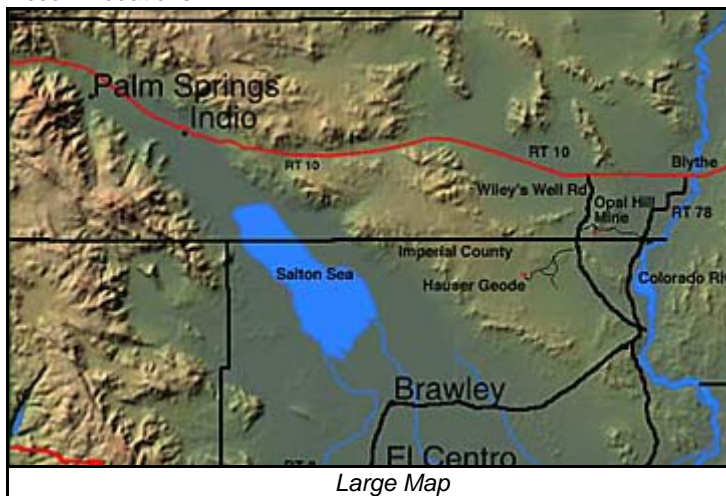
agate is polished and then viewed in the light flashes can be seen. Petrified wood, Apatite, barite, Calcite, Clinoptilolite, Flourite, and Gypsum are also found at Opal Hill Mine.

If you visit the mine, plan to stay a full day or longer. It

takes some time to find a good spot to dig and once you find a spot you will need time to extract the agate. If you only want to spend a few hours, Howard said that there is quite a bit of agate to found in the tailing piles and dumps left behind by others. You can find some beautiful treasures without the hard work and labor of digging out a vein.

**Location** - From Interstate 10, take Wiley Well Exit and head south on the graded dirt road for 17 miles. You will see a sign for Opal Hill Mine on the left side of the road. Go left here and travel east for a few miles on a rough dirt road. A high clearance vehicle is needed to navigate on the last dirt road to the mine.

**Accommodations**



Large Map

**Lodging**- The cities of [Indio](#) and [Blythe, CA](#) offer complete accommodations Blythe is the closest to the area, for more information on the cities, and the accommodations available click on the city.

**Camping** - The Opal Hill Mine is located on BLM land which is an open area for camping. Opal Hill Mine has a couple small trailers which they offer to patrons at no additional charge. There is no charge for camping at the mine.

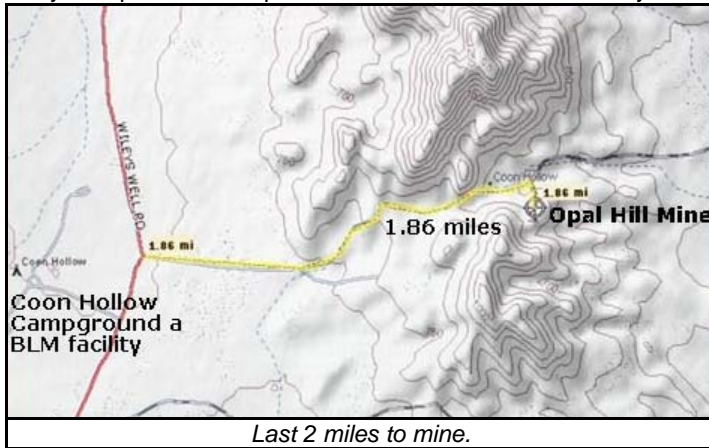
**Campgrounds**

**Coon Hollow Campground a BLM facility**

Located 12 miles south of Interstate 10 (3 miles south of Wiley Well Campground) on the Wiley Well Road. The road to the campground is maintained in excellent condition. It serves as a popular winter haven for rockhounds. Twenty-nine primitive sites are provided with picnic tables, grills and vault toilets. Campers should bring their own firewood and drinking water. A fee is required for overnight use.

**Wiley Well Campground a BLM facility**

This historical well and wash-side campground are situated along Wiley Well Road, 9 miles south of Interstate 10, where the old Bradshaw Trail intersects the well maintained Wiley well Road. Twenty-one primitive campsites are available next to the dry wash



Last 2 miles to mine.

where Ironwood and Palo Verde trees provide some shade. Picnic tables, grills, and vault toilets are provided. A sanitary disposal station for trailers is available at the Wiley Well Rest Area on Interstate 10. Campers should bring their own firewood and drinking water. A fee is charged for overnight use

**Equipment & Tools** - Make sure you pack plenty of food and water since the mine is located on BLM land with no stores nearby. Bring big buckets to haul your precious rocks home and a chisel, wire brush, pick, shovel, sledge hammer and any other tools you need.

Off-Road in Southern California's deserts, check out our [Mojave Road Guide](#) and [The Bradshaw Trail](#). (near I-10) These hard to find guides will take you on a adventure though time.

[Opal Hill Mine Quicktime Movie](#)

For more information write:

Nancy Hill  
Opal Hill Mine  
P.O. Box 497  
Palo Verde, CA 92266  
760 854 3000

From <http://www.desertusa.com/maqjan98/stories/opal.html>

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## Shirley's Opal 2006

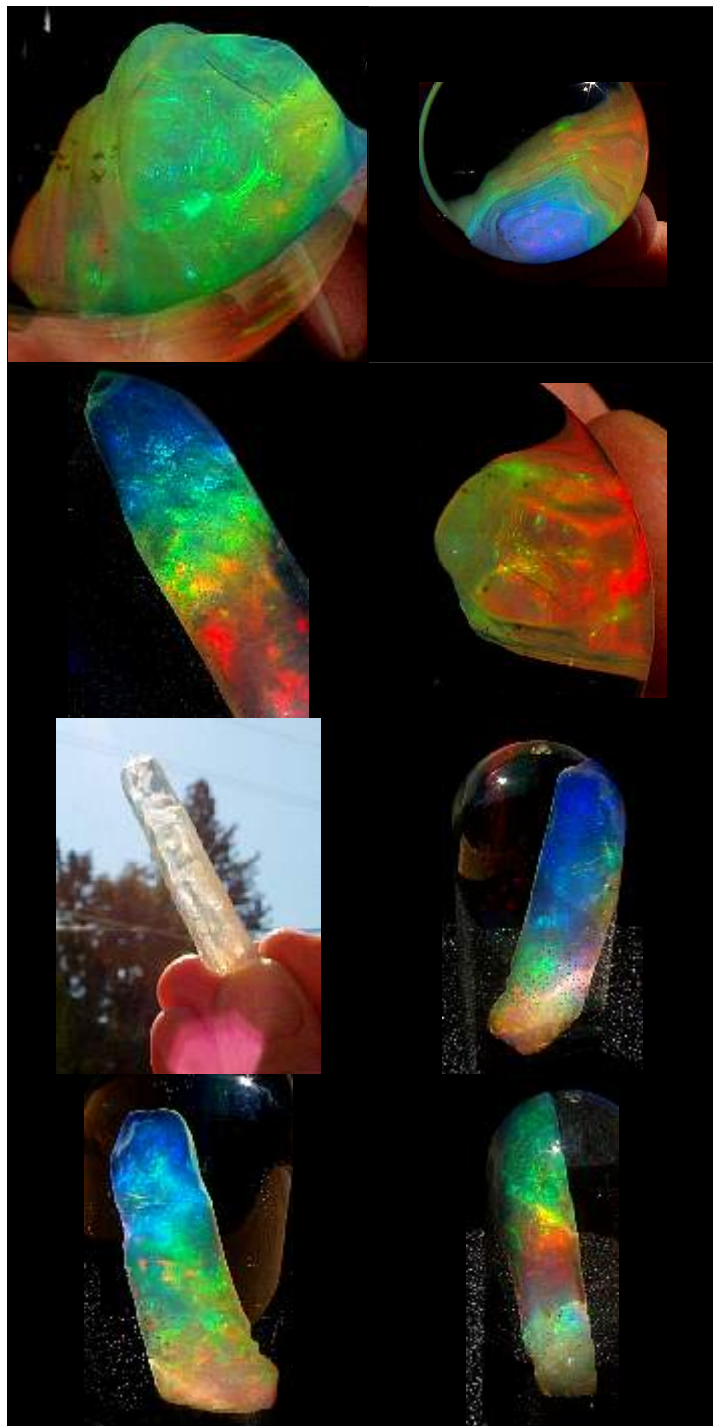
Ken and I spent several hours taking shots of this incredible crystal core Virgin Valley, Nevada opal. The first two shots on the top line and the middle shot on line two are taken looking straight down into the top of the dome at the tip of the opal. We did not move the stone, but rather Ken moved around the opal to shoot it from each quadrant. The missing shot was because the orange-yellow in that orientation was so neon that it looked blown-out. As you can see, there is a totally different dominant color at each 1/4 turn. Amazing!

This is a fantastic opal with outrageous color. Check out the trans-illuminated shot on the third line. You would never suspect that that piece of clear core held such an array of fire. The opal changes color on each of its four long flanks. There are four distinctly dominant colors flashing at each of its four directions. There is blue from one angle while the opal is red from a slightly different angle and as it turns, bright yellow, from another and spring-grass green from the 4th. In addition, at the 1/8th turn the colors fuse to



turquoise, purple, and orange, what a display specimen this is! If only the camera could do it justice. Quintessential Virgin Valley! This opal was recovered at Rainbow Ridge Opal Mine, June 1, 2006, Virgin Valley, Nevada.

From <http://www.holeystones.com/mining/shirley/shirley.html>



Mines in Two Days.” With limited spaces, over 60 showed up Saturday and almost 50 Sunday. There were few no-show’s, denying those on the wait list an opportunity. Hounders attended from the Mexican border up to Carson City and Reno. We drove through heavy rain, with many arriving Friday to stay at hotels, casinos, and the Lake Henshaw Resort.

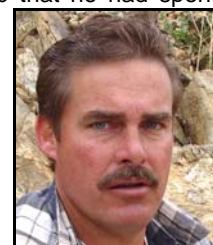


Shep Koss.

Saturday weather was perfect for some serious dirt screening: mid-60s, slightly overcast, and a nice breeze. We eagerly greeted friends who had converged on The Oceanview Mine in Pala to sign in and pay fees. After an orientation with helpful tips by mine owner Jeff Swanger, we were off-and-digging at the rich tailings.

Shovels and rock moved in every direction. Elbow-to-elbow, we were like ferrets on steroids, hauling off bucket after bucket to sift through for colorful gems. And, boy, were they found!! Everything from small, gemmy pink and green chips to large, finger-sized crystals. Many found walnut-sized pieces of gemmy green & pink tourmalines, kunzites, quartz crystals and beryls, including a sweet bi-color beryl going from light blue on one side to pink on the other.

Jeff told Ellen Moe of the Culver City club that he had spent most of Friday driving his skip loader all over Chief Mountain getting grade-A tailings from several mines—the Elizabeth R, the Chief, and the Oceanview. Ellen had been to the Oceanview 6 times in the last year, and she reports the tailings this day had the most variety and the most goodies.



Adam Dean

She was growing a little frustrated finding mainly tourmaline chips and spodumene crystals until a perfect 5-inch quartz point popped out of the pile. In addition, she was filling her “give-away bucket” with quartz chunks, schorl and other specimens to use for the Culver City kid’s program when Jeff walked by, glanced in, and asked why she would want to give away a doubly terminated, bicolored beryl (aquamarine and morganite) with small quartz crystals on the base. The colors were pale, so Ellen just thought it was ugly quartz!

Rudy and Hannah Herbert of the Orange Belt club found 3 large nice tourmalines early in the day. I (Shep) found my best piece to date: a complete tourmaline crystal with clevelandite at the base,

twinning and terminated in an eye-clean green gemmy portion with a thin blue cap weighing in at 61.7 grams. Others found even larger crystals. Michelle Patrick estimates buckets weighed 10-20 pounds, depending on how many large pieces of rock you picked up, and she confirms after 20 of those buckets, shoulders begin to ache!

To alleviate some of that ache and make the trip more enjoyable, Jeff gave free raffle prizes to lucky CFMS members ranging from rough to faceted gems to a pink-and-green tourmaline butterfly pendant. Thanks, Jeff!! Jeff also led 3 tours throughout the day of the working mine for anyone needing a break from digging. Jeff extends a welcome to anyone who would like to come back anytime by making reservations at [www.digforgems.com](http://www.digforgems.com). For the record, the facilities were very clean and the entire day was well managed by a friendly, helpful Oceanview team.

For those camping at Lake Henshaw Resort, I suffered with you! Whoda thunk there’d be hundreds of Royal Ranger Christian Scouts on their revivalist retreat with stages, bands and sermons lasting into the night? Thankfully, they were MUCH quieter late Saturday night than Friday. Beautiful campgrounds, though, with cabins, RV parking and developed campgrounds for tents with a thick canopy of trees.

Also good news: that’s where the Himalaya Mine holds their digs, trucking in tailings. Owner Chris Rose came in from his Oregon Spectrum Mine to meet us at the café near Lake Henshaw. Despite a somewhat warmer morning, once again we were ferrets on

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**Field Trips-South - 2 Tourmaline Mines in 2 Days**

*By Shep Koss & Adam Dean*

*CFMS Editor’s note: Following is a combined, condensed version of multiple field trip reports. Full reports, with photos, may be seen on the CFMS web site.*

You Hounders seem to love tourmaline! After 5 months of planning, Adam, his better half (Teresa Felix), and I (Shep) were pleased to see such a huge crowd turn out for “Two Tourmaline

steroids quickly going through truckload after truckload of dirt searching for gems.

We're not sure Chris and his staff were ready for 44 serious screeners plus another dozen walk-ins (no reservations are needed for the Himalaya). Since the pile of dirt was disappearing quickly, a dump truck with fresh tailings from the hill near the mine arrived about 11:00.

But, by lunch, we had that pile down to the parking lot. Another dump truck came after a lunch break, and the guys barely had time to empty it before buckets were being filled again. Several finger-sized tourmaline crystals were found along with nice pencil tourmalines. At this site, children were finding some of the best pieces, so parents were offering to rent them out to people who weren't having luck!

Chris also had free raffles, ranging from large bags of unsorted tailings to rough to faceted gems to jewelry. While enduring a moderate wait for the last truck, Chris went above and beyond, offering more raffle prizes: cut tourmaline and sunstones, nice tourmaline specimens, and rough pink opal. It seems half of our people won prizes.

But we also found material! Michelle and others felt that the tailings from this mine included lots more rock with less gem material per bucket, but that the gems found were truly beautiful. She reports finding a gem-quality chunk of pink tourmaline that one of the helpers told her could be cut into a 7-carat stone. Many gemmy, facetable pieces like these were found by others, along with more finger-sized crystals. Ellen reported her best find was a fist-sized schorl, found on the road before screening even started!

Even at day's end, as we were packing to leave, a lone woman named Bonnie was killing time by sitting and sifting through the skimpy remains of the tailings pile when we heard her call out "Is this anything?" We came over to look, and some of us said "Nah, toss it," hoping she would. It was a gemmy, 75-carat eye-clean green crystal cross section they valued at \$10/carats, as-is. Congrats to her persistence!! All-in-all, this trip left many happy hounders and was a success. Check out Robyn Hawk's blog for a trip report & pics: <http://flyviewsandreviews.blogspot.com>

This summer Adam and I are taking a timeout from organized trips but plan more when we resume in the fall.

Meanwhile, we do have one important announcement to make, namely: It's a Rockhound Wedding! Adam Dean & Teresa Felix are getting married Nov. 7 2009 at Afton Canyon Campground. A ceremony at 10 a.m. will be followed by a potluck lunch and at Noon sharp we will line up for a field trip to rockhound at one of their favorite sites near the campground.

This is a little-known area with many kinds of rocks in float. There will be agates, jaspers, and even a wonderful plume agate. Easy walking and beautiful rocks! This will be a come-as-you-are event. We would like to welcome all CFMS Members. Members will need all the typical collecting equipment as well as cameras, a chair and a dish for the potluck lunch after the wedding.

Please come and celebrate with us at our favorite place. We do not have a registry. If you feel inclined, we will have a money tree at the luncheon.

Directions to Afton Canyon campground:

If coming from the north (Las Vegas): South on Interstate 15. Exit on Afton Road and make a left. Cross over the freeway overpass and follow the dirt road 3 miles until you come to a rise in the road. The campground is on the right side just over the rise.

If coming from the south (Barstow): North on Interstate 15. Exit on Afton road and make a right. Follow the dirt road 3 miles until you come to a rise in the road. The campground is on the right side just over the rise. Program GPS: Dunn, California, will get you to Afton Road exit.

From Shep, happy hunting, and from Adam, best wishes and better stones!

From September 2009, CFMS Newsletter

+++++

## October 2009 Gem & Mineral Shows

From Rock & Gem Magazine

More shows can be found at

<http://www.rockngem.com/showdates.asp>

2-4--COSTA MESA, CA: Gem Faire; Gem Faire Inc.; OC Fair & Event Center/Bldg. 14 & 16, 88 Fair Dr.; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$5 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: [info@gemfaire.com](mailto:info@gemfaire.com); Web site: [www.gemfaire.com](http://www.gemfaire.com)

4--FALLBROOK, CA: Show, "Fall Festival Of Gems"; Fallbrook Gem & Mineral Society; Fallbrook Gem & Mineral Society & Museum, 123 W. Alvarado St.; Sun. 10-4; free admission; vendors, raffle, silent auction, wheel of fortune, gem ID, gold panning, geode cracking, museum and gift shop open; contact Mary Fong-Walker, 123 W. Alvarado St., Fallbrook, CA 92028, (760) 728-1130; e-mail: [ikonmining@gmail.com](mailto:ikonmining@gmail.com); Web site: [www.FGMS.org](http://www.FGMS.org)

9-11--BIG SUR, CA: 18th annual show, "Big Sur Jade Festival"; South Coast Community Land Trust, Pacific Valley School PTO; Pacific Valley School, Hwy. 1, across from Sand Dollar Beach; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission; contact Kirk Brock, (831) 659-3857 or (831) 402-1143; Web site: [www.bigsurjadefestival.com](http://www.bigsurjadefestival.com)

9-11--SACRAMENTO, CA: Gem Faire; Gem Faire Inc.; Scottish Rite Center, 6151 H St.; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$5 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: [info@gemfaire.com](mailto:info@gemfaire.com); Web site: [www.gemfaire.com](http://www.gemfaire.com)

10-11--GRASS VALLEY, CA: Show, "Earth's Treasures"; NV County Gem & Mineral Society; NV County Fairgrounds, 11228 McCourtney Rd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$2, children under 12 free; special shark jaws and fossil exhibit, lapidary and jewelry-making demonstrations, dealers, club member displays, kids' activities, silent auction, door prizes, grand prizes; contact Kim Moore, 16045 Banner Quaker Hill Rd., NV City, CA 95959-8816, (530) 470-0388; e-mail: [kmoore160@comcast.net](mailto:kmoore160@comcast.net); Web site: [www.ncgms.org](http://www.ncgms.org)

10-11--TRONA, CA: Show, "Gem-O-Rama"; Searles Lake Gem & Mineral Society; SLGM Show Bldg., 13337 Main St.; Sat. 7:30-5, Sun. 7:30-4; free admission; three field trips to Searles Lake to collect saline minerals, mineral dealers, exhibits, tour of Searles Valley Minerals manufacturing plants, geode cutting and sales, sphere-making demonstration, hourly prizes, grand prize drawing; contact Jim & Bonnie Fairchild, 84830 12th St., Trona, CA 93562, (760) 372-5356; e-mail: [slgms@iwwisp.com](mailto:slgms@iwwisp.com); Web site: [www1.iwwisp.com/tronagemclub/](http://www1.iwwisp.com/tronagemclub/)

16-18--DEL MAR, CA: Gem Faire; Gem Faire Inc.; Del Mar Fairgrounds/Exhibit Hall, 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd.; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$5 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: [info@gemfaire.com](mailto:info@gemfaire.com); Web site: [www.gemfaire.com](http://www.gemfaire.com)

17--WEST HILLS, CA: 11th annual show; Woodland Hills Rock Chippers; First United Methodist Church, 22700 Sherman Way; Sun. 10-5; free admission; gold panning, crafts, gems, minerals, rocks, fossils, jewelry, dealers, displays, demonstrations, silent auctions, hourly door prizes, raffle, hands-on activities; contact Mary Beth Pio, P.O. Box 205, Woodland Hills, CA 91365, (818) 341-9645; e-mail: [show@rockchippers.org](mailto:show@rockchippers.org); Web site: [www.rockchippers.org](http://www.rockchippers.org)

17-18--CAYUCOS, CA: Show; San Luis Obispo Gem & Mineral Club; Cayucos Vets. Hall, 10 Cayucos Dr.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-5; free admission; door prizes Sun., dealers, rocks, gems, minerals, fossils, jade, jewelry, lapidary rough and equipment; contact Michael Lyons, (805) 610-0757; e-mail: [jadestar@charter.net](mailto:jadestar@charter.net)

17-18--LAKESIDE, CA: Show, "Rockhound Roundup"; El Cajon Valley Gems & Mineral Society; Lakeside Rodeo Grounds, 12684 Mapleview Ave.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission; demonstrators, jewelry, beads, findings, rough and faceted gemstones, arts and crafts, kids' games, equipment; contact Carolyn Boland, 10950 Vista Camino, Lakeside, CA 92040, (619) 561-7498; e-mail: [bobpeggyb99@aol.com](mailto:bobpeggyb99@aol.com); Web site: [www.ecvgms.com](http://www.ecvgms.com)

17-18--PLACERVILLE, CA: 26th annual show; El Dorado County Mineral & Gem Society; El Dorado County Fairgrounds, 100 Placerville Dr., Hwy. 50 Exit 44B; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$3, children 12 and under free; special exhibit "All That Glitters," case displays, lapidary and jewelry-making demonstrations, free kids' activities, more than 40 dealers, minerals, rough and faceted gems, jewelry, beads, fossils, petrified wood, meteorites, lapidary and jewelry making supplies, equipment, books, silent auction, door prizes, raffle; contact Jackie Cerrato, P.O. Box 950, Placerville, CA 95667; e-mail: [info@rockandgemshow.org](mailto:info@rockandgemshow.org); Web site: [www.rockandgemshow.org](http://www.rockandgemshow.org)

17-18--SANTA ROSA, CA: 33rd annual show; Santa Rosa Mineral & Gem Society; Veterans Memorial Bldg., 1351 Maple Ave.; exhibits, demonstrations, prizes, artists, sellers, rough rock, gemstones, books, tools, supplies; contact Tom, (707) 546-4537; e-mail: [farmarch@sonic.net](mailto:farmarch@sonic.net); Web site: [www.Gem-N-I.org](http://www.Gem-N-I.org)

17-18--WALNUT CREEK, CA: Show, "The Great Contra Costa Crystal Fair"; Pacific Crystal Guild; Civic Park Community Center, 1375 Civic Dr. at Broadway; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; adults \$5, children under 12 free; gems, jewelry, crystals, beads, psychics; contact Jerry Tomlinson, (415) 383-7837; e-mail: [sfxtl@earthlink.net](mailto:sfxtl@earthlink.net); Web site: [www.crystalfair.com](http://www.crystalfair.com)  
 23-25--PLEASANTON, CA: Gem Faire; Gem Faire Inc.; Alameda County Fairgrounds, 4501 Pleasanton Ave.; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$5 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: [info@gemfaire.com](mailto:info@gemfaire.com); Web site: [www.gemfaire.com](http://www.gemfaire.com)  
 23-25--SALT LAKE CITY, UT: Annual show; Mineral Collectors of UT; Trolley Square; Fri. 12-9, Sat. 10-9, Sun. 10-5; free admission; mineral dealers, showcase displays, mineral identification table, book table, hourly drawings, free specimens for kids; contact Curt Forrester, (801) 789-6325; e-mail: [fossilmin@dcdi.net](mailto:fossilmin@dcdi.net); Web site: <http://sites.google.com/site/mincollUT/Home>  
 24-25--LOS ALTOS, CA: Annual show; Peninsula Gem & Geology Society; Los Altos Youth Center, 1 San Antonio Rd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$3, juniors (12-18) \$2, children under 12 free; dealers, lapidary, gems, minerals,

fossils, exhibits; contact Dave Muster, (408) 245-2180; e-mail: [mustersgems@yahoo.com](mailto:mustersgems@yahoo.com)  
 24-25--SACRAMENTO, CA: Show, "Jewelry, Gem, & Variety Expo"; Green New Media & Life Expo Inc.; Cal Expo, 1600 Exposition Blvd.; Sat. 10-7, Sun. 10-5; adults \$14, seniors two for \$14, children under 12 free; book signing, speakers, demonstrations; contact G. Fisher, (702) 467-9411; e-mail: [GEFisher39@aol.com](mailto:GEFisher39@aol.com); Web site: [www.GreenNewMediaLifeExpo.com](http://www.GreenNewMediaLifeExpo.com)  
 25--TIGARD (PORTLAND), OR: Wholesale show; Rings & Things; Embassy Suites Hotel - WA Square (Embassy Ballroom), 9000 SW WA Square Rd.; Sun. 12-5; contact Dave Robertson, (800) 366-2156; Web site: [www.rings-things.com/Show/](http://www.rings-things.com/Show/)  
 30-1--SANTA ROSA, CA: Gem Faire; Gem Faire Inc.; Sonoma County Fairgrounds/Grace Pavilion, 1350 Bennett Valley Rd.; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$5 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: [info@gemfaire.com](mailto:info@gemfaire.com); Web site: [www.gemfaire.com](http://www.gemfaire.com)

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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

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

**Volume #42 Issue #10  
October 2009**

TO:

### Some Topics In This Issue:

- Starfire Opal Mine, Gabbs Nevada
- The "Glorious Jubilee" Black Opal
- Rare 472-Carat Emerald in Santa Ana
- 500-Carat Diamond Found
- Hope Diamond Goes Naked
- Leopard Opal – A New Type of Opal
- Quest for Fire at Opal Hill Mine
- Shirley's Opal 2006
- Field Trip 2 Tourmaline Mines in 2 Days

### Important Dates:

**October 7 - Board Meeting)**

**October 8 - General Meeting**

**Speaker:** David Burton of Lapidary International on what it takes for a novice to become an Opal Miner.

— GENERAL MEETINGS —

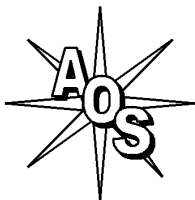
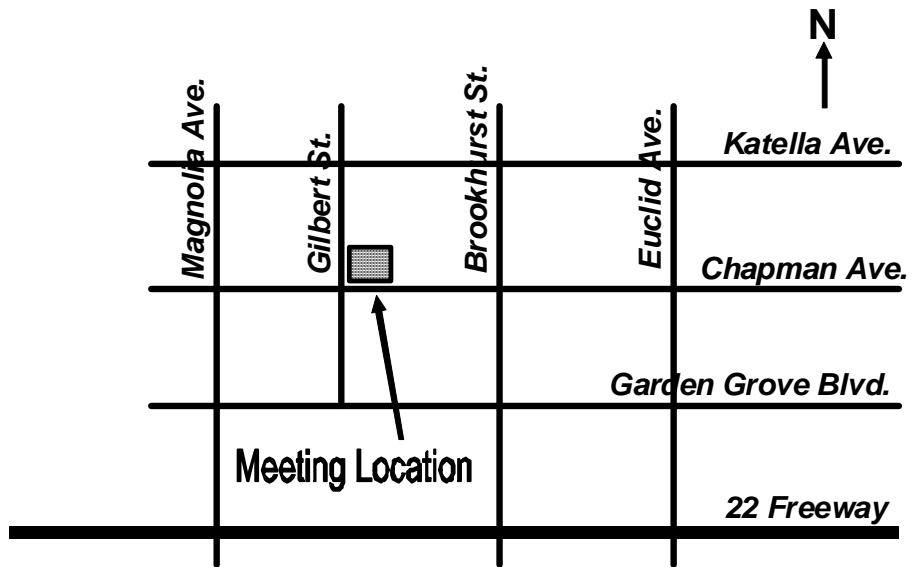
2nd Thursday of the Month  
7:00 pm - 9:00 PM

Garden Grove Civic Women's Club  
9501 Chapman Ave.  
Garden Grove, CA 92841  
(NE corner of Gilbert & Chapman)

### MEETING ACTIVITIES

Opal Cutting, Advice, Guest Speakers,  
Slide Shows, Videos, Other Activities

## **October 8 David Burton on What it Takes for a Novice to be an Opal Miner**



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