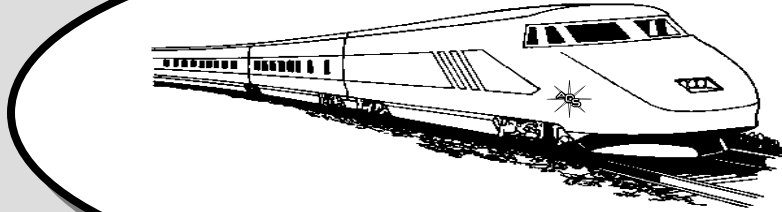


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Members Only Website Password

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

Wes Roth Says Hello

By The Editor

Long time member and AOS ex-President Wes Roth called me the other night from Washington State and wanted to say hello to the American Opal Society. Wes was planning on attending the Opal & Gem Show, but, as he put it, "was inconvenienced" by a heart attack. Wes says that there was no permanent damage, but he now has to wear a pacemaker. Wes said that it was a wake-up call and is now watching his diet and has lost weight and is living much healthier.

Wes is planning on visiting Southern California soon and wishes to see some of the members when he comes.

You can contact Wes by his new e-mail at wesroth@hotmail.com.

This is the best Honduran opal I have ever seen – The Editor

Famous Honduras Opal

By A Edwin Skinner

This 6 ct Black Seam Opal above has become one of our most famous Honduran Opals.

It appears on the first pages of a Google Search, for Images, under Opal or Opals. It is not identified as a Honduran opal as other entities have used this scanned image I made quite a few years ago to show off their products. (Thank you.) I put this image on the a1opals.com website under Black Opals, to show off our Honduran opals.

That is fine by me. But I would like everyone to know that it was a re-cut Black Seam Opal that my good friend Brian and partner of many years polished, from the Tablon mine in Erandique.

This stone we called the "Edufo Opal" for the miner who first brought it to me, some ten years ago. It originally weighed 10 ct., but had two faults. We re-cut and polished it to make a perfect gem of 6 ct., which you see in this image.

Jan 2009. From <http://www.a1opals.com>



The Edufo Opal

AOS Election Next Month

The AOS will hold elections at the February General Meeting. The offices to be voted on will be President and Vice-President.

If you interested in running for office, please submit your name to the board by the January meeting. Current Southern California local members in good standing may run for office. The current members of the Board of Directors are as follows:

President ¹	Jim Lambert	Position Up for Election
Vice-President ¹	Stan McCall	Position Up for Election
Treasurer ¹	LaVerne Christenson	Recently elected
Show Chairman ²	Gene LeVan	Up for appointment
Newsletter Editor & Webmaster ²	Jim Pisani	
CFMS Representative ²	Fran Todd	
Member At Large ³	Dr. Walt Johnson	
Member At Large ³	Pete Goetz	
Member At Large ³	Jay Carey	

Note 1 – President, Vice-President, and Treasurer are elected

Note 2 – Positions that are appointed by the AOS Board

Note 3 – Member At-Large – usually previous board members

In Memoriam – Clare Gagnon Friend of the AOS

AOS member Clare Gagnon has passed away last month after suffering complications due to heart surgery.

Clare was a long time member of the AOS and a great contributor to the Society. Clare would organize the dozen or so demonstrators for the Opal & Gem Show every year for the past decade at least. This was no small feat! In addition, he would tirelessly demonstrate and discuss his passion – faceting – to anyone who would listen.

Clare was an expert faceter. He was one of the foremost members of the Faceter Guild, always willing to lend a hand or advice to a beginner.

Clare was brutally honest. I would show him some of my tourmaline finds, hoping they were worth good money after being cut – he would carefully examine it with his loupe – taking minutes – then reply – “It’s junk”, dashing my hopes. But if you had something nice, he would tell you in his cool way – “Don’t throw it away.”

Below is Clare’s obituary prepared by his family for his funeral services. He will truly be missed by us all.

Jim Pisani, Editor, AOS



Clare Joseph Gagnon

December 25, 1921 – December 22, 2009

Beloved Husband, Father, Brother, Uncle, Grandfather, Great Grandfather, Teacher, Mentor and Friend

Clare (aka Cee Jay) was born and raised in Clear Lake, Iowa, on Christmas Day, 1921. His father was a contractor who taught him the trade and Clare helped him build post and beam barns for the farmers. During WWII, Clare went to college in Minnesota and earned his degree at UCLA in Civil engineering with a Masters in business administration. He was stationed in Germany for a time towards the end of the war as an assistant to an officer. After returning to the states, he worked in the Douglas Santa Monica Engineering Department where he met his bride to be, Maxine. They were married on New Years Eve 1949 at Santa Monica Catholic Church and would have celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary this year.

Clare worked as a civil engineer for the city of Burbank, California for a time but soon got a better position and moved to Berkeley to work for that city, where they adopted three children, two of whom are twins. They had a house built for them in the Berkeley Hills that enjoyed a beautiful view of the Bay Bridge. But again an employment opportunity came along and with the children all under five years old, the family moved to Westminster, California. There he worked for the city until he got his last and most interesting job with the Los Angeles Metropolitan Water District, from which he reluctantly retired after more than 25 years.

While raising their children, Clare and Maxine encouraged good school habits and grades, music enrichment, the love of traveling, and hiking in the mountains. The family spent summer vacations camping through all the national monuments from here to Iowa and hiked into the backcountry on the Jon Muir trails with another family and pack burros two different summers. Many Christmas vacations were spent driving deep into Mexico to Mazatlan, Mexico City, and climbing the pyramids also. Additionally, they made a five week summer camping trip through Europe.

Clare was a Cub Scout leader for many years, long after his son grew up and out, which began the volunteering and mentoring phase of his life. He loved to take his troop to hike Mt. Whitney annually for many, many years. After retiring and with the kids all gone the loving couple took up rock hounding and traveled the world together. This evolved into a passion that led them on adventures and enriched their lives with lifelong friendships. The pair joined the Searchers Gem and Mineral Society and progressed to joining the Opal Society, the Carvers Guild, and the



Clare demonstrating his faceting craft at the 2001 AOS Opal & Gem Show.

Faceters Guild where he was the editor in chief of their monthly news letter as well as a member. Clare had volunteer taught wire-wrapping, silversmithing and soldering, as well as faceting in the lapidary workshop at the Veterans Hospital in Long Beach for over 25 years. Most recently he taught these techniques at the Seal Beach Leisure World lapidary workshop.

Clare and Maxine loved demonstrating their crafts at gem and rock shows together for many years. But the couple's gallivanting together was cut way too short when Maxine suffered strokes, leaving her in need of professional care which remains status quo. This caused Clare's final move to Leisure World 10 years ago.

For the last 14 years, Clare has been an exceptionally devoted husband, visiting Maxine and feeding her lunch four days a week without fail until his recent heart surgery in September.

Clare was a devout Catholic, never missing Sunday mass and raising his family this way. He ushered at Blessed Sacrament Church for a time as well.

Clare is survived by his wife Maxine, daughters Susan Meagher and Elaine Nelson, son William Gagnon, grandchildren Mariah Meagher, T.J. Meagher, Carissa Gagnon, and Brianna Gagnon, great grandchild Makenzie Minick, sister-in-law Pauline Lica, niece Lorraine Lica, and many other nieces and nephews in Iowa.

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Famous Gems

The Imperial Opal



Working a small section of old ground at Opalton in 1906

By Len Cram

Opalton has produced some of the geological wonders of the world, and the "Imperial Opal" is no exception. Valued at £50,000 in 1901, an incredible amount, it weighed 250 carats. An astonishing piece of crystal opal, it was found in 1895 during the height of production and bought by Maurice Lyons, a leading Brisbane lawyer, also an entrepreneur heavily involved in land and mining ventures.

The only description we have of the gem is from the London Times of 9 March 1901, written after their reporter was invited to a special viewing:

"It was not the best sort of day on which to inspect such a magnificent jewel, the atmosphere being overcast and dull. Only the opal when taken out of its box and wrappings seemed to light up the room. Those present looked at it with a certain awesome joy, and handled it in the same spirit. "How beautiful! How splendid!" said the ladies. Sir Horace Tozer said, of all the Queensland opals he had seen, this one was the finest."

"The gem has been cut into an irregular shape pending the ultimate decision as to the purpose for which it will be used. In its present shape it is two and half inches long and one and half in depth weighing 250 carats. It is not its size that is considered so remarkable, but its quality. Its brilliance almost approaches that of the diamond and has all the colours of the ruby, emerald and



Len Cram, Opalton, July 9, 2009

amethyst, which are clearly marked in a beautiful harlequin pattern. It was broken in two during mining, the smaller piece, less than half the size of The Imperial Opal, is also an extraordinary gem. The stone comes from Opalton, in the western district of Queensland, and was discovered six years ago."

During a conversation while showing Sir James Dickson the gem in 1899, Lyons told him it was his intention to present the gem to Queen Victoria at the opening of the first Commonwealth Parliament. As there were no Australian gems in the Crown Jewels he believed it would be a fitting representation of the new Commonwealth of Australia. Sir William George Herbert, another of his friends, named the stone, The Imperial Opal, after learning of his intentions.

In preparation to carrying out his plan, Lyons had the gem deposited in a London bank, with the intention that the Queen should have the first inspection, knowing her preference for opals. Unfortunately, due to her death, she never saw the gem, but Lyons, still wanting to present the gem to the Crown, offered the stone to King Edward. The London Daily Chronicle commented on his gesture in March 1901:

"Mr Maurice Lyons, of Queensland, is desirous of presenting to King Edward The Imperial Opal for inclusion in the Crown Regalia. His Majesty has not yet seen this magnificent jewel, but we believe that he has indicated his views on the matter, and takes the position that so valuable a gem could not be accepted as a gift from any individual subject to the crown. It is Mr Lyons' desire that The Imperial Opal should represent the Australian Commonwealth in the Crown Jewels."

Unfortunately, I have not been able shed any light on what might have happened to this incredible opal. I would appreciate it



Len Cram on the field in 1996

should any reader know its whereabouts or even a smidgen of its lost history.

Printed with permission from Len Cram and prepared especially for the American Opal Society

Quite the Gem Dandy

Once overlooked, now breathtaking in its beauty, a 733-carat sapphire has a history worthy of its weight.

*By Victoria Kim
January 5, 2010*



The 733-carat Black Star of Queensland was at the center of legal action involving an antiques dealer and his ex-lover. (Kazanjian Bros.)

The boy brought home a dull-colored half-pound stone he found on the hillside, and his father, Harry Spencer, thought of the perfect place for it. They would use it as a doorstep.

The year was 1938, and their home was a modest shack in a sparsely populated, dusty stretch of gem-mining territory in central Queensland, Australia. The stone sat at the backdoor for 10 years, until a jeweler recognized its potential and brought it across the Pacific. In Los Angeles, it was polished to reveal a six-pronged, mesmerizingly beautiful star -- or so goes the story that is passed down about the largest-known star sapphire in the world.

The Black Star of Queensland would make its way around the world, weaving in and out of spotlight and obscurity, with stops in the Smithsonian in the '60s, on Cher's neck in the '70s, and at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto in 2007. It would capture the fantasy of a young boy, who would dream of one day owning it. It would be mounted on white gold and 35 diamonds added around its rim.

Some profess the stone has a certain magic, bringing luck to the fortunate few who have touched it. One owner said it brought on the darkest period of her life, leaving memories she never wanted to revisit.

Eventually, as many prized things do, it landed in L.A. County Superior Court, at the center of allegations of deception, unkept promises and a lover's betrayal.

Harry Kazanjian learned to polish stones because of an eye infection. About 1908, his family fled from Turkey to France to escape the persecutions that preceded the Armenian genocide. When they tried to board a ship bound for the United States, guards wouldn't let young Harry on because of his eye. As his family sailed across the Atlantic, Harry stayed behind in Paris and apprenticed for his stonecutter uncle.

Kazanjian discovered he had a knack for envisioning a gemstone in the rough, the way sculptors see a finished work in a slab of marble. When he reunited with his family, he persuaded his brother James to go into the gem business with him.

The brothers traveled the world buying rare and valuable stones. The Spencer family had sold them many blue and yellow sapphires. One day in 1947, Harry Kazanjian saw a pile of black stones at the Spencers' home that they had thought worthless. He asked to inspect them, thinking they might be star sapphires. Spencer told his son to go get the doorstep.

In the fist-sized stone, Kazanjian spotted a copper-colored glimmer, a hint of the impurity that sometimes grows along a sapphire's crystals to create the star, an optical effect known as an asterism. He bought it, reportedly for \$18,000, and brought it to the shop he ran with his brother in downtown L.A.

Amid the whirring of grinding wheels and hissing of polishing machines, Kazanjian studied the stone for weeks before cutting into it. Over months, he worked, bent over a copper wheel impregnated with diamond dust, gently carving away to create a dome.

"I could have ruined it a hundred times during the cutting," Kazanjian told a Times reporter at the time.

In 1948, the Black Star of Queensland debuted in New York. Actress Linda Darnell cradled the egg-sized stone in her fingers and held it up for the cameras. At 733 carats, it was far larger than the Star of India, a 563-carat blue star sapphire previously known to be the largest.

It was valued at \$300,000, but the Kazanjians "declared emphatically" that it wasn't for sale.

Michael Kazanjian, Harry's nephew, spent his summers and weekends as a child at the shop, trying to emulate his uncle's craft on less-valuable gems. He had watched in awe as his uncle polished the Black Star.

To him, the stone was like a member of the family. He would occasionally visit it at the family vault and talk to it, and it would talk back, he said.

"The stone had a lovely personality," said Michael, who took over the family business in the 1970s. "Very dramatic, very powerful."

One day, in 1971, he saw an opportunity to show it off when a Hollywood manager called him with an odd request: "Can you put a few million dollars of jewelry on Cher?" By then, Sonny and Cher had seen their fame ebb. After a failed film venture and lackluster album sales, they were taking a stab at something new: a television variety show. In the premiere, they planned a sketch where Cher would be decked out in valuable gems, and security guards would keep Sonny away as he sang "Close to You."

Cher's first stop had been Tiffany's. But when the show's producers learned insurance would cost \$8,000, they looked for another option.

Instead of insurance, Michael hired half a dozen police officers to escort him and the Black Star to the studio. The stone was tied on by hand with a flimsy wire to a necklace with about 100 carats of diamonds.

A few hours into the taping, he panicked. Cher was dancing. Michael jumped up on stage and stopped the take, fearing the stone would drop and shatter.

After its brief television fame, the stone sat out of public view for the most part, making only occasional appearances at private charity functions. It has never been worn since.

Jack Armstrong says he was a 5-year-old living in Blair, Neb., when he first laid eyes on the Black Star. That summer, his father, an auditor, took him on a trip to Washington, where the Kazanjians had lent the stone to the Smithsonian for a display with the Hope Diamond. Armstrong said he breezed past the diamond but became fixated on the sapphire.

"It took my breath away," he said. "It's like you see your future in front of your eyes."

In 2002, he was introduced to the Kazanjians and was invited to see their collection. When he saw the Black Star, he couldn't believe he was looking at the stone from his childhood and immediately wanted to buy it.

Armstrong, a former model now in his 50s with no shortage of flamboyance, says he is an artist and a dealer of art and antiques. Attorneys have described him in court papers as a man with no discernible source of income who lived off a wealthy older girlfriend, a divorcee living in Switzerland.

"I've never met a personality like him," said Doug Kazanjian, Michael's son, who met with Armstrong about the sale. "He had this overwhelming passion to buy it."

After the sapphire had been in the family for more than 50 years, the Kazanjians decided to sell it to fund a scholarship at the Gemological Institute of America.

Armstrong arranged to buy the stone with his girlfriend. He was so in love with it, he said, that he slept with it under his pillow and drove around with it in his jacket.

But love or no love, he was quick to slap on a price tag and offer it for sale. A month after he bought it for an undisclosed amount, he issued a press release saying the sapphire was available -- for \$50 million.

"The sale of the Black Star sapphire is a huge event in the gem stone market," Armstrong said in the press release in December 2002. "To have a stone like this come on the market is tantamount to having a Raphael painting suddenly emerge for sale; it happens maybe once, maybe twice in a lifetime."

Gabrielle Grohe had never heard of the Black Star, and in hindsight, she might wish it stayed that way.

In her 60s and wealthy from an earlier marriage to an industrialist, she was introduced to Armstrong in 2002.

Her version of the tale, as told in court papers by her attorney, is filled with scathing accusations against Armstrong, her onetime lover. (Armstrong, whose attorneys never responded to the allegations, declined to discuss the court case.)

Within days of their meeting, Armstrong told her about the stone and pressured her to buy it. She paid the bill, and he promised to pay part of it, Grohe contended.



Cher wears the Black Star of Queensland in a sketch on TV in 1971.

The next year, Armstrong moved to Switzerland to live with Grohe. Armstrong said in an interview that he went to Europe to pursue his art; Grohe contended he refused to get a job and relied on her for his extravagant living expenses.

Soon, their relationship soured. He drank heavily, became physically abusive and got angry when she brought up his promise to pay for the stone, she alleged. In September 2007, Grohe called the police, bought him a

plane ticket back to the U.S. and kicked him out.

That marked the beginning of an international tussle for control of the stone.

The next month, Grohe met with a potential buyer in Canada, where the sapphire was on display at the Royal Ontario Museum, with its value then estimated at \$4.1 million. Armstrong foiled her efforts at a sale, "desperate at the thought that his gravy train would end," she alleged.

When the loan to the museum came to an end in 2008, Armstrong, who was listed as a co-owner in the museum's records, went behind Grohe's back and asked that it be shipped to him in Los Angeles, in care of the Harry Winston jewelry shop in Beverly Hills, according to court documents.

A few weeks later, Armstrong showed up at the shop with a woman he said was a buyer and asked for the stone. The salon director, Goli Parstabar, had learned of the dispute and refused.

Furious, Armstrong returned with police officers, but was rebuffed. Then he had an attorney send a demand letter. When that didn't work, he sued Harry Winston for \$25 million and issued press releases saying his stone was being held hostage.

"I was born in Kansas," Armstrong told the New York Post, which ran a story with the headline "HEAVYWEIGHT GEM SCUFFLE." "If something like this happened in Wichita, someone would have gone to jail!"

In court, the allegations escalated. Armstrong alleged that Parstabar had cost him a lucrative deal and ruined his reputation by refusing to show the stone to his client. Grohe accused Armstrong of fraud and unlawfully trying to take control of the stone, for which she contended he never paid a dime.

Doug Kazanjian wears his grandfather's ring with a stone just like the Black Star -- only 700 carats smaller.

"It's almost as if you're looking into space," he said of the stone. "It's like having the universe on your finger."

Last year, he was asked by an attorney in the case to identify his family heirloom.

He was ushered into a private room at a Beverly Hills bank, where attorneys, Parstabar, and Armstrong huddled around him. Before him was a tightly wrapped cardboard shipping box that had sat untouched since it arrived from Toronto. All eyes focused on him opening the box.

He sifted through bubble wrap and tissue paper until he found the velvet case holding the stone.

"It was like getting to see an old friend," he recalled.

He inspected the diamonds, and the mounting. He scanned the graining at the top of the stone. He shined a flashlight to create the six point star.

This is the Black Star of Queensland, he wrote on a piece of paper, and signed it.

The legal dispute quietly settled out of court in a confidential agreement. According to a court document, Armstrong agreed to pay \$500,000 within three months to buy out Grohe.

At 5 p.m., on the last day that he could claim ownership, a personal check from Armstrong arrived at Grohe's attorney's office. The check bounced.

A few months later, a judge entered a final ruling: the stone was all hers.

The Black Star of Queensland once again sits in obscurity, with its owner in Switzerland. Grohe wants to put that period of her life behind her and would rather not talk about it, her attorney said. She hasn't decided what to do with the stone.

Armstrong, meanwhile, says it's enough for him that he once held the sapphire he fantasized about as a child. Though he lost the court battle, the gem brought him good fortune in his work and life, he said.

He wants to make a film about the stone, he says, for "every little kid who dreams." He says he is on the brink of a deal with a studio. He imagines it will be a tale of a princess trapped

in an enchanted stone, and a boy who finds it by chance.

"It's a magical story," he said. "It should be told."

From LATimes.com

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The Discovery of Precious Opal at Whelan, Washington

By Daniel E Russell

The first significant discovery of precious opal in the United States occurred in 1890, when a deposit was accidentally discovered on a small farm in Whelan, Whitman County, Washington.

In the summer of the year, William Leasure had a shallow well dug on his farm. At a depth of only 22 feet, the well-diggers struck a layer of clay and decomposed basalt that graduated into solid basalt. A New York jeweler named James Allen happened to examine some of the rock thrown out of the excavation, and was surprised to find that many of the cavities in the basalt were filled with precious opal. Gemologist George F Kunz, reporting on the discovery in 1892, describes James Allen as a "jeweler, of Yonkers, New York" (Kunz, 1892), while the New York Times, in a brief notice on the opal discovery, calls him a "jeweler of Moscow," Idaho (NY Times, 1890a). The New York Times makes reference to a James Allen, jeweler, doing business on South Broadway in Yonkers in January 1890 (NY Times, 1890b); whether or not this is the same Allen is not certain.

Closer examination revealed that the opals occurred in the last 4 feet in the excavation. Kunz stated that the "good opals are often found embedded in so-called 'soap holes,' in a greasy, fine-grained, and very tenacious clay. Kernels of opal, all of good quality, are found in hollow amygdules in the rock, the cavities being generally larger than the opal." The opal masses varied from the size of a pea to a walnut, and while Kunz described the material as "plentiful," (Kunz 1892a) most of the gem-quality opals which were recovered were quite small. As Kunz noted, "the smaller nodules are very rich

in color, but the larger ones often have little or no play of colors." (Kunz, 1892b)

The opal was white with a rich play of red and green colors. "...If properly worked," Kunz pronounced, "it is likely to be one of the most promising of our precious stones, from a financial point of view." (Kunz 1893). The cut stones compared favorably with the best of the precious opals that had been produced by the mines of Hungary (which throughout most of the 18th and 19th centuries were considered to be the finest opals in the world) and with the newly-discovered Australian opals.

The announcement touched off a small-scale "opal rush" to eastern Washington. Soon, a mining camp called Gem City had sprung up. By June of 1891 a company named the North American Gem Opal Mining Company was organized with \$250,000 in capital to mine the opals (Smythe, 1911; Beckwith, 1972, states that the name of the company was the North American Gem and Opal Mining Company). They began work in July of 1891, and by October had recovered about \$3,500 worth of opal, with an expenditure of only \$280 in supplies and mining costs. Some of the opals which they sold commanded prices of \$30 to \$55 a carat. A 3.5 carat opal succeeded in fetching the remarkable price of \$500, while a 2 ounce mass of rough opal was sold for \$1,200. Kunz stated "The work is carried on by about 20 men, and is much in the nature of an open quarry. As it progresses into the hill the top soil becomes deeper, but the layer of black basaltic rock next to it and overlying the softer opal-bearing rock remains of about the same thickness... This spring, owing to the unusual weather, about three weeks' time was lost, and work was interrupted by water and snow three times; still, with an expenditure of about \$1,200 up to date, the results have more than doubled in both quantity and quality." (Kunz, 1892a).

The production of the opal deposit in the Whelan area was comparatively short lived, and by about 1904 work was largely abandoned. By 1911, it was noted that the stock of the North American Gem Opal Mining Company was essentially valueless.

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- From <http://www.mindat.org>*

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Cuttlebone Casting

Cuttlebone casting is both spontaneous and easy. No casting kiln required and it can be done at our workshop or at home. Give it a try or talk with Drew Wilson about hosting a workshop for this fun process. There are many ways to create a mold, but the direct method of carving directly into the bone is a simple, low tech process. You'll be able complete a cast in less than an hour and have a unique element to inspire your next design. Large cuttlebones can be purchased from jewelry suppliers, small from pet stores. One supplier of large cuttlebone is Bracken Bird farm (bring the children to feed the birds and farm animals) 10797 New Jersey St. Redlands, (909) 792-5735

Materials: Cuttlefish bone, Sterling silver scraps, Powdered casting flux, Concrete block, Carving and marking tools (pencil,



dental tools, paint can opener, awl, square tubing, round tubing, etc.), wire cutters, Soft brush, Masking tape, Acetylene torch with a large and medium tip, Fireproof surface with adequate ventilation, Fireproof brick, Respirator mask, Crucible.

To prepare mold for casting, divide cuttlefish bone in half in a straight line with awl. Determine centerline and score. Make several passes into line with awl until groove cuts completely through soft side of bone and you can feel scraping against hard

shell. Next, break shell by snapping along score line; should break evenly in two.

Rub each half with soft surface down on smooth sand paper. Hold bone firmly and apply a light, even pressure as you rub. Continue to remove material until each half has flat, smooth plane. If outer shell begins to scrape on concrete, carefully clip that area of shell with small wire cutter.

After carving is complete, use soft brush to remove dust and loose material. For a well-defined casting, firmly brush both sides of mold to ensure it is clean and dust-free. Hold both sections of cuttlefish mold together and firmly secure halves with masking tape. Make sure tape tightly

holds bones together with no gaps or spaces where molten metal could escape. Secure mold firmly in a place where it will not tip. Whatever holding method you choose must be secure, fireproof, and placed on a fireproof surface. Proper ventilation is essential. A coffee can filled with sand works best for many.

Preheat the crucible until a slight glow appears and carefully add metal. Try using scrap sterling leftovers from other projects. If you don't have any scraps, you can purchase casting grain from a jewelry supply company. Once metal is molten, add a small amount of flux with steel tool. For a small casting, less than 1.8 teaspoon is sufficient. Flux helps keep metal clean and aids flow as it is poured into mold. Ensure that the pouring edge of crucible is red hot, so metal doesn't cool before entering mold. Pour molten metal into mold, being very careful not to get fire too close to casting. Be sure to keep torch aimed at crucible until all metal has been poured. The smell will be quite unpleasant and you will be thankful for proper ventilation.

When cool, remove masking tape from piece to reveal casting. Dispose of mold and clean silver with dishwashing detergent and a brass brush. The final casting is now ready to be used in your jewelry design.

For photos and step-by-step details, view Cuttlebone Casting by Karen J. Lauseng at

<http://www.jewelryartistmagazine.com/projects/cuttlebone-casting>

From The Newsletter Of The Pasadena Lapidary Society

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January 2010 Gem & Mineral Shows

From Rock & Gem Magazine

More shows can be found at

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

JANUARY 2010:

1--GLOBE, ARIZONA: 53rd annual show; Gila County Gem & Mineral Society; Gila County Fair Grounds, 3 miles north of Junction US 60-70; Fri. 9-5, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; adults \$3, students with ID and children with adults free; live demonstrations, door prizes, displays, minerals, jewelry; contact Jim Mills, P.O. Box 487, Miami, AZ 85539, (928) 701-1712; e-mail: oldulking57@hotmail.com

1-10--QUARTZSITE, ARIZONA: Show, "Tyson Wells Rock & Gem Show"; Tyson Wells Enterprises Inc.; Tyson Wells Show Grounds, 100 W. Kuehn St.; 9-5 all days; free admission; contact Kym Scott, P.O. Box 60, Quartzsite,

AZ 85346, (928) 927-6364; e-mail: tysonwells@tds.net; Web site: www.tysonwells.com

1-31--LAUGHLIN, NEVADA: Show, "Clouds Jamboree"; Richard Cloud; Avi Resort and Casino - Outdoor RV Park, 10000 Aha Macav Pkwy.; 10-5 every day; contact Richard Cloud, P.O. Box 284, Quartzsite, AZ 85346, (866) 558-7719; e-mail: cloudsjamboree@tds.net; Web site: www.cloudsjamboree.com

8-10--DEL MAR, CALIFORNIA: Show, "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; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

8-10--MESA, ARIZONA: 38th annual show, "A.L. Flagg Gem & Mineral Show"; Mesa Community College, US Hwy. 60 and Dobson Rd.; free admission; Peralta Stones display, more than 100 dealers, local clubs and organizations, displays, free activities for children, kids' egg carton kits; contact Ray Grant, (480) 814-9086; e-mail: raycyn@cox.net; Web sites: www.azminfun.com and www.flaggshow.info

15-17--LARGO (ST. PETERSBURG), FLORIDA: 34th annual show and sale; Pinellas Geological Society; Largo Cultural Center, Parkside Room, 105 Central Park Dr.; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 12-5; contact Hugh Sheffield, (727) 894-2440

15-17--SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA: Show, "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; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

15-17--SARASOTA, FLORIDA: Show; Frank Cox Productions; Municipal Auditorium, 801 N. Tamiami Trail (Hwy. 41); Fri. 10-5, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; gems, jewelry, beads; contact Frank Cox Productions, 755 S. Palm Ave. #203, Sarasota, FL 34236, (841) 954-0202; e-mail: frankcox@comcast.net; Web site: www.frankcoxproductions.com

16-17--DeLAND, FLORIDA: 39th annual show; Tomoka Gem & Mineral Society; Volusia County Fair Grounds, State Rte. 44; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$4, children 12 and under free; hourly door prizes, grand prize, silent auction, kids' activity table, TFG Faceters Guild demonstrations and Q&A, other demonstrations; contact Florence D. Nordquist, 521 S. Palmetto Ave., Daytona Beach, FL 32114, (386) 226-4032; e-mail: fndesign@aol.com; Web site: www.tomokagms.org

16-17--EXETER, CALIFORNIA: Show, "Gemboree"; Tule Gem & Mineral Club; Veteran's Memorial Bldg., Hwy. 65; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; free admission; dealers, gems, grab bags, club displays, jewelry, rocks, minerals, lapidary supplies, demonstrations, "Wheel of Fortune", door prizes; contact Pepper Okada, 5924 W. Iris Ct., Visalia, CA 93277, (559) 733-5842; e-mail: pepperok@clearwire.net

16-17--FREDERICKSBURG, TEXAS: Show, "Hill Country Gem & Mineral Show"; Fredericksburg Rockhounds; Pioneer Pavilion, Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park, 1606 S. Hwy. 16, south of downtown Fredericksburg; Sat. 9-6, Sun. 10-5; free admission; Rollin' Rock meeting Sun., hourly door prizes; contact Jeff Smith, 208 Castle Pines Dr., Kerrville, TX 78028, (830) 895-9630; e-mail: jeffbrenda@windstream.net; Web site: www.fredericksburgrockhounds.org

22-24--HILLSBORO, OREGON: Show, "Gem Faire"; Gem Faire Inc.; Washington County Fairgrounds, 873 NE 34th Ave.; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$5 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

22-24--ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA: Show; Frank Cox Productions; The Coliseum, 535 4th Ave. N; Fri. 10-5, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; gems, jewelry, beads; contact Frank Cox Productions, 755 S. Palm Ave. #203, Sarasota, FL 34236, (841) 954-0202; e-mail: frankcox@comcast.net; Web site: www.frankcoxproductions.com

22-24--TYLER, TEXAS: Show, "Gemstone and Jewelry Showcase"; East Texas Gem & Mineral Society; Rose Garden Center, 420 Rose Park Dr.; Fri. 9-5, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$3, students \$1; exhibits, demonstrations, fluorescent mineral display, geode cracking, dealers, rocks, minerals, jewelry, fossils, supplies, Wheel of Fortune, silent auction; contact Keith Harmon, 8316 Oxford Dr., Tyler, TX 75703, (903) 581-4068; e-mail: kharmon1219@sbcglobal.net

29-31--SAN RAFAEL, CALIFORNIA: Show, "Gem Faire"; Gem Faire Inc.; Marin Center/Exhibit Hall, 10 Avenue of the Flags; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$5 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; email: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

30-31--PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA: 19th annual show; Panama City Gem & Mineral Society; Bay County Fairgrounds, American Legion Bldg., U.S. Hwy. 98 (15th St.) and Sherman Ave.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; free admission; door prizes, gems, minerals, fossils, beads, jewelry, lapidary arts, wire wrapping, exhibits; contact Ruth Alldredge, 316 Cherry St. #38, Panama City, FL 32401, (850) 784-0740; e-mail: Aquezpie@comcast.net

1-28--QUARTZSITE, ARIZONA: Wholesale and retail show, "Desert Gardens International Gem & Mineral Show"; Desert Gardens RV Park; 1064 Kuehn

Rd., south side of 110, along frontage road; 96 daily; free admission; crystals, minerals, rough, polished, jewelry; contact Sharon or Sandy, Desert Gardens RV Park, 1055 Kuhen St., P.O. Box 2818, Quartzsite, AZ 85346, (928) 927-6361; e-mail: info@desertgardensrvpark.net; Web site: www.desertgardensrvpark.net

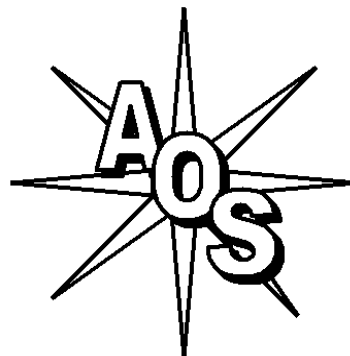
30-12-TUCSON, ARIZONA: Business to Business Gem Trade Show; Gem and Lapidary Wholesalers Inc.; The Gem Mall, 4475 S. Country Club Rd.; daily 10-6, last day 10-3; contact Gem and Lapidary Wholesalers Inc., P.O. Box 98, Flora, MS 39071-0098, (601) 879-8832; e-mail: info@glwshows.com; Web site: glwshows.com

30-12-TUCSON, ARIZONA: Business to Business Gem Trade Show; Gem and Lapidary Wholesalers Inc.; The Grant Inn, 1365 W. Grant Rd. (I-10 and Grant Rd.); daily 10-6, last day 10-3; contact Gem and Lapidary Wholesalers Inc., P.O. Box 98, Flora, MS 39071-0098, (601) 879-8832; e-mail: info@glwshows.com; Web site: glwshows.com

30-13-TUCSON, ARIZONA: Show, "Arizona Mineral & Fossil Show"; Martin Zinn Expositions; InnSuites Hotel, 475 N. Granada Ave.; Sat. 10-6; free admission; AMFS Treasure Hunt: win prizes for visiting show locations, pre-register online or at the InnSuites Hotel; daily drawings Feb. 1-10, more than 400 vendors in four locations; contact Regina Aumente, P.O. Box 665; Bernalillo, NM 87004, (505) 867-0425; e-mail: mzexpos@aol.com; Web site: www.mzexpos.com

30-13-TUCSON, ARIZONA: Show, "Arizona Mineral and Fossil Show"; Martin Zinn Expositions LLC; The InnSuites Hotel (475 N. Granada), The Mineral & Fossil Marketplace (1333 N. Oracle Rd.), Quality Inn (1025 E.

Benson Hwy.), and Ramada Ltd. (665 N. Freeway); 10-6 daily, final day 10-5; free admission; more than 400 dealers from all over the world, Artists' Gallery (InnSuites Hotel); contact Martin Zinn Expositions, P.O. Box 665, Bernalillo, NM 87004-0665, fax (303) 223-3478; e-mail: mzexpos@aol.com; Web site: www.mzexpos.com



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American Opal Society Membership Application

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	NEW MEMBERS	\$40	
INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP FEE (All addresses <u>outside</u> of USA)		\$10	
PRINTED NEWSLETTER FEE (Paper copy postal mailed instead of PDF file by e-mail)		\$5	
ADDITIONAL BADGES (Your First Badge is <u>free</u> when joining)		\$10	
TOTAL PAID DUES plus International, Print or Badge Fees if Applicable :			

Please make check or money order payable to "**American Opal Society**". Mail payment and application to:
American Opal Society; PO BOX 4875; Garden Grove, CA 92842-4875
 An optional, quicker method of payment is via the **Internet**. To pay, just visit the membership page on our website at http://opalsociety.org/aos_application_by_web.htm and complete the form. You may pay with a **Credit Card** or via **PayPal** account. The transaction is completely secure and the AOS never sees your credit card number. The AOS PayPal account is membership@opalsociety.org.

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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: 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.

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Date:

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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 #43 Issue #1
January 2010**

TO:

Some Topics In This Issue:

- Wes Roth Says Hello
- Famous Honduran Opal
- AOS Election Information
- In Memoriam – Clare Gagnon
- The Imperial Opal
- Black Star of Queensland Sapphire
- Discovery of Opal at Whelan, WA
- Cuttlebone Casting

Important Dates:

Jan. 13 - Board Meeting

Jan. 14 - General Meeting
Member Show & Tell Night

Members are to bring their favorite opals, gems, specimens, creations, etc., to show off to the Society.

— GENERAL MEETINGS —

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

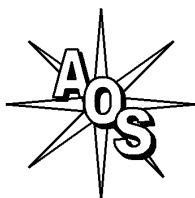
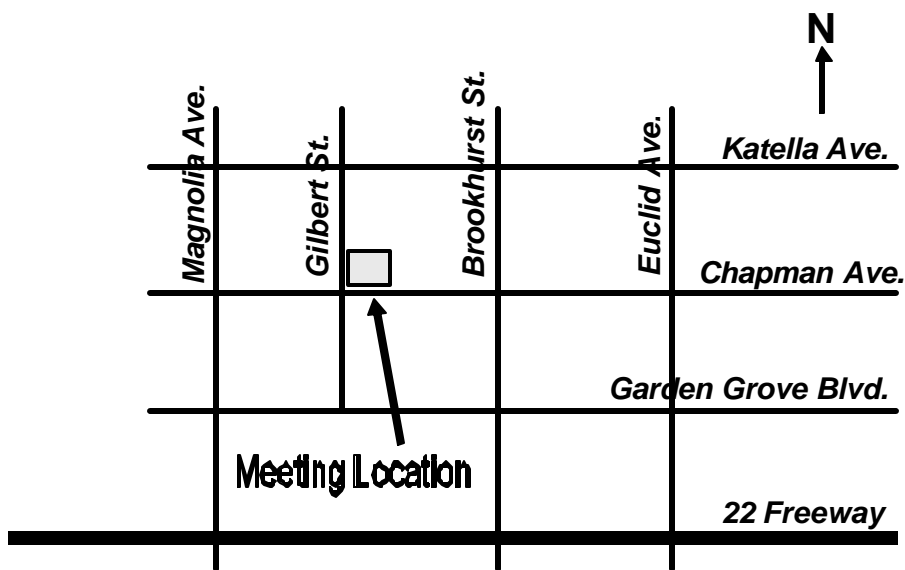
Garden Grove Civic Women's Club
9501 Chapman Ave.
Garden Grove, CA 92841
(NE corner of Gilbert & Chapman)

MEETING ACTIVITIES

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

January 14

Member Show and Tell Night



The American Opal Society

<http://OpalSociety.org>

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