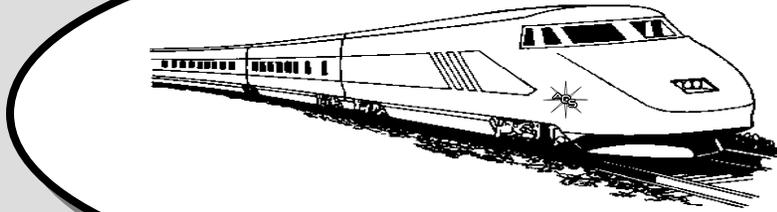


# The Opal Express

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## President's Message

*By Pete Goetz*

Greetings all. Hope last month was good for you and yours. I reached that milestone of "65", even got one of those red, white, and blue cards from the government - oh-boy. Our April general meeting was really great. For those of you who were not there, you missed an excellent presentation by Janie Duncan on "Beads of the World", as well as a magnificent collection of 'eye candy'. There were new beads, old beads - (thousands of years old) and lots of colorful beads fit for the eye of the most discriminating of bead connoisseurs.

Next Month, May 2010, Jim Pisani has promised a really engaging lecture on the Florescence of OPAL and 'other minerals'. Plus a dazzling display of 'Fluorescent' OPAL and 'other minerals'. This has the makings of a really great evening. So., I encourage some of you couch potatoes out there to come-on down and join your brethren in OPAL, even you regular rock hounds are invited, to an evening of fun, mineral education and social interaction.

I would like to thank Russ Madsen for his diligence as our Anaheim Arts Council representative, giving us the opportunity to make a presentation to the AAC. Jay Carey gave a presentation to the Anaheim Arts Council last Thursday, on the subject of Barbara McCondra's mining operation in Australia. Lecture was well received by all present. Other AOS members present were Russ and Vicky Madsen, Cory Kuepper and Jim Pisani. Hope to see more of you all at the next general meeting.

## 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: "flash".

## April Recap – Janie Duncan on Beads from Around the World

*By Jim Pisani*

Janie Duncan gave an excellent lecture on Beads From Around The World this past April General Meeting. Janie shared her collection explaining about through history & how they are made. She showed beads from 6000 years ago to today, made of stone, bone, glass, and metal.

It was quite a presentation. Janie allowed everyone to get right up and close the to beads and passed each type around, while giving a narrative and history of each. Janie, thanks again for your excellent presentation!



*Janie Duncan on Beads Around The World*

## May Lecture: Jim Pisani on Fluorescent Minerals

*By Jim Pisani*

Your humble Editor, will give a presentation on Fluorescent Minerals with an Emphasis on Opals this for May's General Meeting. Jim will explain and demonstrate fluorescence with both long wave and short wave ultraviolet lamps; show effects of some common, but attractive, fluorescent minerals, and show whether the various types of opal fluoresce or not.

Here are two articles of one of America's best historic opal sites – one from 1958 and one from 2007. Compare the two. Some things don't change in the desert! However, use any information - maps, directions, etc., with caution. The Editor



Trail in the pass between Opal and Black mountains plunges sharply down to Black Canyon.

## Mojave Desert Opal Diggings

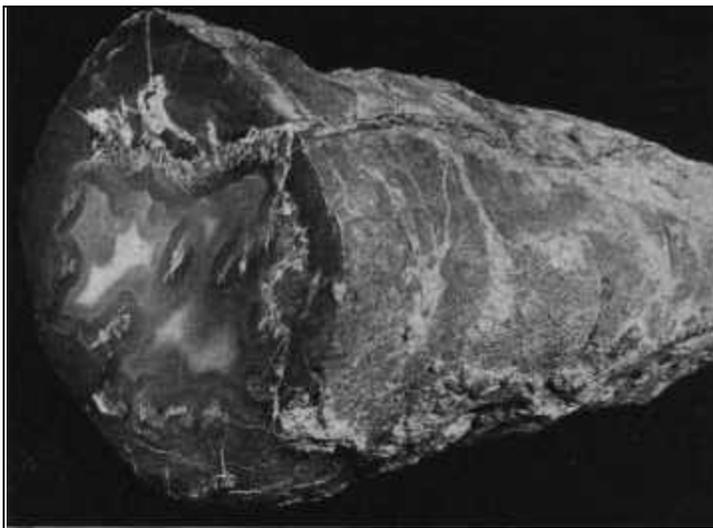
Here's a desert outing for folks whose outdoor interests are varied —a weekend field trip on which collecting gem stones, studying ancient Indian petroglyphics, examining old mining relics, and other activities all can be enjoyed

By Harold O. Weight  
Map by Norton Allen

In 1940 and 1941 I spent my every free day following trails and byways of the Opal Mountain-Black Canyon country northwest of Barstow, California, and collecting nodules, jasper and opal there. For in addition to rockhunting, there is endless fascination in this Mojave Desert wonderland for anyone with a trace of interest in archeology, geology, botany, photography, hiking and mining history.

Since World War II, every time we sighted Opal Mountain—and it is an ancient landmark visible great distances and from many places—I remembered the gemstones I had found. Then I would tell Lucile about the natural wonders and man-made curiosities there.

"But," I invariably concluded, "The geodes and jasper probably



Still the prize in the author's Opal Mountain collection is this four and a half by five and a half by eight-inch nodule-log, collected 18 years ago.

are all now."

And — invariably — Lucile would protest: "But, undoubtedly the Indian petroglyphs are still there! And the opal mines, the tufa cliffs and the lava flows! Let's go and see!"

So in April of this year, with Laura Buren Briggs, publishers of Twenty-nine Palms' newspaper, The Desert Trail, we went - partly to satisfy Lucile's curiosity, partly because this spring was a spectacular desert flowering season and we wanted to see the upper Mojave in bloom.

But, most of all, we were afraid that if we delayed too long, we might never go. The Armed Services are - attempting to absorb this wonderful land into their already grossly-over stuffed multi-million acre super-empire which has sealed off most of this part of the Mojave—including the Naval Ordnance Test Station, Edwards Air Force Base, Camp Irwin and the Cuddeback Range. And we knew that if they succeeded, it probably would be closed to the ordinary American citizen for the rest of our lives.

Their failure so far has been due - to the law sponsored by Congressman Engle which forces the military to obtain Congressional approval for any big grab. Currently the Navy is seeking 250 square miles in the Opal Mountain, Black Canyon and Mountain, Inscription Canyon and Superior Valley area. Conservation societies, the Western Mining Council and San gone Bernardino County Supervisors are standing firm against the request.

The route we followed from Barstow last spring - along old Cave Springs (now Camp Irwin) Road to the Superior Valley Road, then on and the Coolgardie Trail - is not the best or the shortest, but it has always been my favorite. About a dozen miles from Barstow it enters one of the finest - Joshua forests on the Mojave—towering giants truly arboreal in appearance, with massive straight trunks, stout branches and thick crowns. They are best viewed along the



Buren Briggs and Lucile Weight examine the collapsed ghost of old Coolgardie, early Mojave dry-placer camp. Opal Mountain is at upper left.

wandering twin ruts of the Coolgardie Road.

Coolgardie's most enduring monuments are the great mounds of rock and gravel on the brushy slopes — mute reminders of the massive backbreaking labor that is the basis of all mining. The dry-placer camp was named for the famous diggings in Australia. Its gold, according to California state geologists, came from the same ancient river bed that left rich deposits at Summit Diggings, Goler Wash and Red Rock Canyon. Mining began in 1900, and a number of men were still working before World War II.

At that time it seemed every foot of ground was owned, and the miners were extremely touchy about trespass abuses. On our recent trip we stopped to photograph the tin roof of a collapsed cabin bearing the words "Old Coolgardie Camp." This cabin was standing, though dilapidated, on my last previous visit, with a sign on it I've always remembered:

"NOTICE—Since '25 this cabin is claimed by me to be within the S.E. one-quarter of the S.E. one-quarter of S. 32.—Nothing but a

legal survey disproving it will be accepted. All line-stepping, marker-changing nonworking sneaking rats KEEP AWAY."

We saw no evidence of recent operations there this spring, but since the owner's name was freshly painted on the collapsed cabin, the same conditions—and feelings—may still exist.

Six miles southwest of Coolgardie we joined the main road from Hinkley, improved about 1947 to a pumice quarry. But we left it almost immediately, since the road we sought—up to the pass between Opal and Black mountains—branches west from it just north of where we came in. This quarry road from Hinkley is the best and most direct route to Opal Mountain — especially recommended for low-clearance cars.

The Mojave around Barstow was indeed sharing in the spring's great flowering. The displays multiplied as we drove on. The air became scented with perfume, and we passed through great gardens of many-colored blooms.

We negotiated the last four-tenths mile up and down a steep ridge and past an old loading frame into the little valley between Opal Mountain Peak and the flow-cliffs of Black Mountain. When I first came here, in the spring of 1940, I was guided by Marion A. Speer—the man who opened this area for the rockhounds and led hundreds of them into it. Most collectors know him, or know of him, since he is a real pioneer in our hobby.

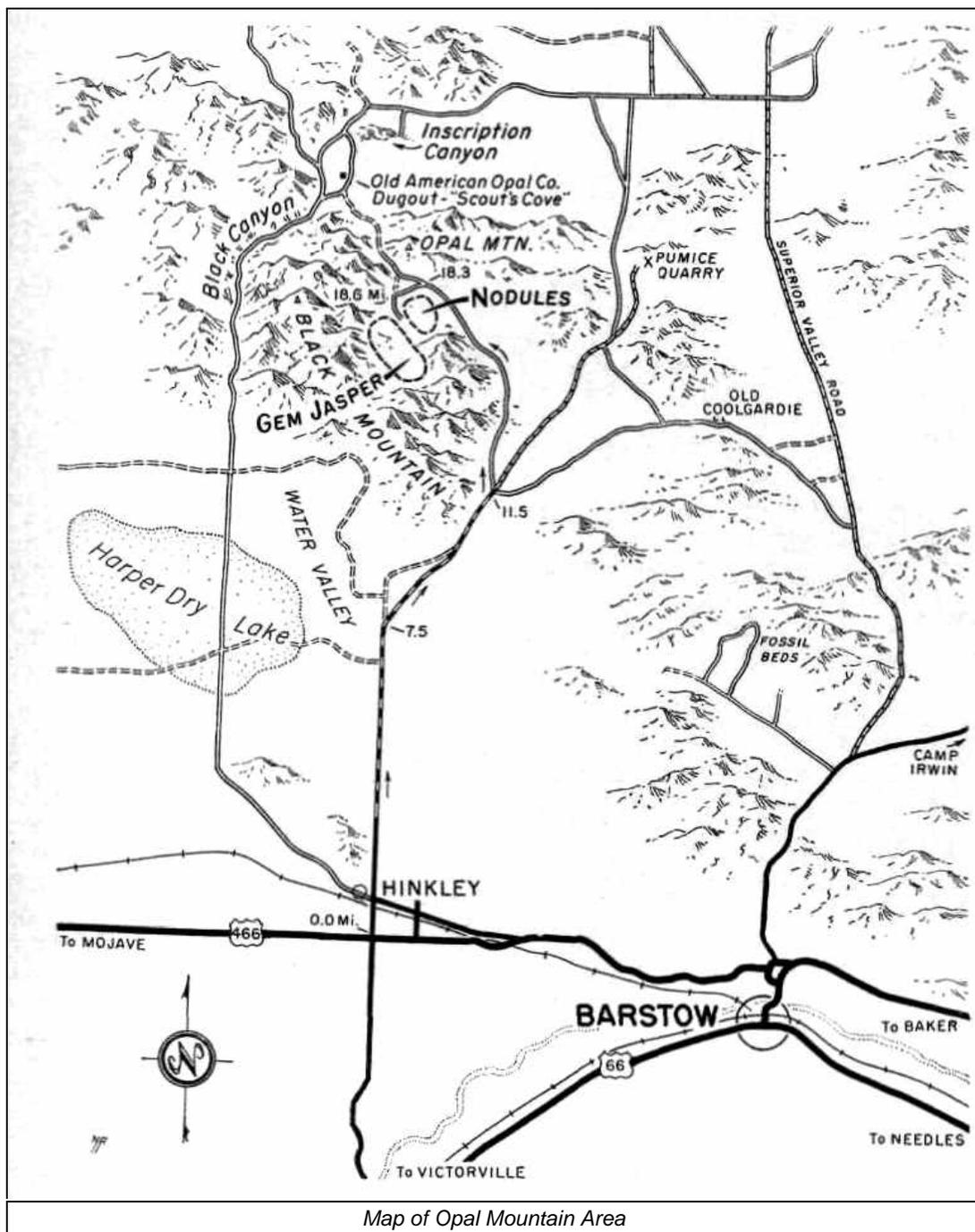
"After I was transferred to California by the Texas Company in 1925," Speer told me recently, "I met a man in the Cadys who recalled seeing some peculiar rocks in the Opal Mountain country. I went to find them.

"The bald face of Opal Mountain was my guide. I started north from Hinkley in an old Dodge and finally reached Opal Mountain and prospected out the geodes.

"My second trip was in 1927. We camped two nights, digging geodes from the wall to the north. Since then right to the present, I have been taking people out there."

Speer first displayed some of his rocks and the historical relics of boom camps, freight lines, mining enterprises, frontier trails and railroads at a little museum building in Huntington Beach. Today the Western Trails Museum — the result of 300,000 miles of wandering and collecting—is a prime attraction at Ghost Town, Knott's Berry Farm, Buena Park.

Except for a few on exhibit, Speer has given away all the nodules and geodes collected in Opal Mountain. On our trip to Opal Mountain this spring we found no complete nodules on the tertiary side, though pieces of chalcedony, opal and matrix could be picked



Map of Opal Mountain Area

up almost everywhere. But, a few minutes shovel work produced two fair sized whole nodules, which seemed to bear out Marion Speer's insistence: "There are plenty of good ones left—you just have to dig!"

As for the jasper on the Black Mountain side—only the surface has been scratched. It is possible to find good pieces even in areas actively worked. And on that trip and two we have made since, I dug out gem jasper — banded, moss and some plume, in reds, yellows, lavenders, greens and browns—better than any I found 18 years before.

With the day passing rapidly, we loaded our rocks, returned to the main road, and followed it over the divide. Here it plunges down a ridge to the floor of a Black Canyon tributary. Jeeps and high pickups will have no trouble with this ridge route. Otherwise it is for experienced rough-road drivers, and down-hill is advised.

Entering Black Canyon, the road branches, the left fork goes directly down to Harper Lake and Hinkley. Once this was a bad



*American Opal Company's dugout still stands: This photo was taken by Lou Wescott Beck early in the century when the company was operating. Dog is the famous Rufus of Death Valley, said to have saved many men from desert heat.*

sandy road upgrade. Now, apparently, most of the year it is a good often-used route for entering the canyon.

We turned right, up Black Canyon, to examine some of the old opal mines. Common opal is found many places on both sides of Opal Mountain. Some is pretty and will cut small stones, but the mining rush here early in the century was for precious opal. Charles Orcutt, pioneer California mineralogist, described its occurrence here. But, if it does exist there is no recorded production, and the miners who trenched and dug failed to find it in paying quantities.

It is legendary that Tiffany & Co., New York, mined gem opal in Black Canyon. A 1954 newspaper story said Tiffany had found a \$2000 stone there "recently." I could never find confirmation of these yarns, and Marion Speer, who contacted the Tiffany people, declares: "They told me they thought the geology was right for precious opal—as I do—and that they had spent \$90,000 there, but had never found fire opal."

I have never seen evidence of a \$90,000 mining expenditure in Black Canyon. The most enduring ghost of that era of lost dreams is the sturdily constructed semi-dugout of the American Opal Company, cut in the tufa about one mile up from the Opal Mountain road junction. In the '40s it sometimes was referred to as the mystery hut, and this spring I was surprised to find "Scout Cove" painted on the stone door arch. There is no mystery about the dugout, and the Scouts didn't build it. Once on that same door was printed: "American Opal Company, 1910."

Personally, I am very fond of that dugout. One day in 1941 I arrived here before daylight, and began digging in the opal veins to the west. I paid no attention to the intensifying heat, and at noon was struck with all the symptoms of heat exhaustion. I crawled into the dugout, soaked my head, and then relaxed in its relative coolness until the sun was gone. When I felt able to move, I drove back to Barstow.

From the dugout we turned back down the canyon. Black Canyon, with lava cliffs and flows overlying sheer tufas and contorted sedimentaries, is spectacular enough to reward any visitor. And besides, it has been a trailway since the first dusky desert travelers passed this way. In several places they left

petroglyph memorials. About six and four-tenths miles down from the Opal Mountain branch, we stopped in the narrows to photograph a particularly fine group to which Marion Speer had introduced me in 1940.

It was dusk when we reached the canyon mouth. There the greatest thrill of the trip was waiting. We thought we had seen mass blooming on the other side of Black Mountain, but here, between its southern base and Harper Lake, and stretching east and west as far as we could see, was a sheet of pale blue-lavender like some other-world ocean. Hardly believing all these square miles could be flowers, we drove among them and stopped. The perfume was heady, and as a breeze swayed the tall stems, we had the feeling we were suspended on this flowery sea.

Gilias were the blossoms creating the mass color—some with stems over three feet tall—growing like planted grain. And carpeting the ground beneath them we found verbena, white evening primrose, small golden primrose, Bailey, owl clover and larkspur.

As we drove on, the car lights played on masses of gently swaying blossoms, adding to the unreal atmosphere. But the dream became a nightmare when I tried to follow the old road across Harper Dry Lake to Black's Ranch ruins. There had been heavy rain and runoffs on the lake, and we detoured along streams looking for crossings, splashed along muddy ruts, and sometimes searched with flashlight to determine where the road ran. Finally we cut a new road and reached Hinkley. Next trip, to photograph the flower-sea, we found quite a good road around the lake to the canyon mouth.

Principally because of its remarkable petroglyphs, an effort is underway to make this region a state park. Certainly these historical treasures should be preserved. United support of the great mass of rock collectors would be helpful here. However—we are only too well aware that often the first move after establishing such a park, for whatever purpose, is to forbid rock collecting; and that some conservation leaders have been particularly outspoken against rock collectors.

Perhaps in the future these groups will reach an understanding, and unite in true and effective conservation of the many features of our desert wilderness which desperately need defense. In the meantime, certainly we can agree with the spirit of the sign posted in Black Canyon by the Archeological Survey Association of Southern California:

"This is Black Canyon, a very special and beautiful part of Southern California. Three cultures of Indians have lived here: One very old with primitive tools; another not as old; the last may have known the first Spaniards. They all have left their drawings on these walls..."



*Inscription Canyon contains spectacular collection of ancient petroglyphs.*



American Opal Company's dugout still stands today (2010)

"They are fascinating to study. Do not chalk them. Color or ordinary film will show more than your eye can see, especially in the morning or afternoon.

"Do not shoot the wild burros or take home turtles — live in peace with this extraordinary place. It is filled with charming ghosts and has brighter stars than other canyons. Ask the old homesteaders who lived here.

"And please do not injure or attempt to break out these rock drawings. The Antiquities Act says NO. It also says \$500 and-or ninety days.

"The undersigned will go all out to bring to trial anybody thoughtless enough to injure or steal these and other antiquities. We hope you will help us too."

**And to that every desert lover — rockhound and conservationist—must say: "Amen!"**

*From Desert Magazine, November, 1958.*

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### Collectible Specimens Litter the Mojave Desert Waiting For Rockhounds to Pick Them Up

May 18, 2007

By John Pinson / Special to The Press-Enterprise



Opal Mountain rises in the Mojave Desert northwest of Barstow. Rockhounding is allowed, but visitors should respect active mining claims.

Northwest of Barstow sits Opal Mountain. With the promise of opals littering the ground, and the possibility of collecting some interesting mineral specimens, a day trip into the desert was too much to resist. The area has been mined periodically for precious opals. On my visit, I found a fresh mining claim staked out and there is no lack of opal all over the area.

It is a great place to visit and hike with lots of interesting mineral specimens all over. Most of it is common opal, without the "play of light" of precious opal. If this isn't exciting, look closely because some of the opal will exhibit the color flash of precious opal.

**ROCKHOONDING:** Rockhounding is the hobby of identifying and collecting minerals. Many rockhounds also cut, polish and prepare their specimens into beautiful display pieces or jewelry. Others prefer to leave specimens in their natural state.

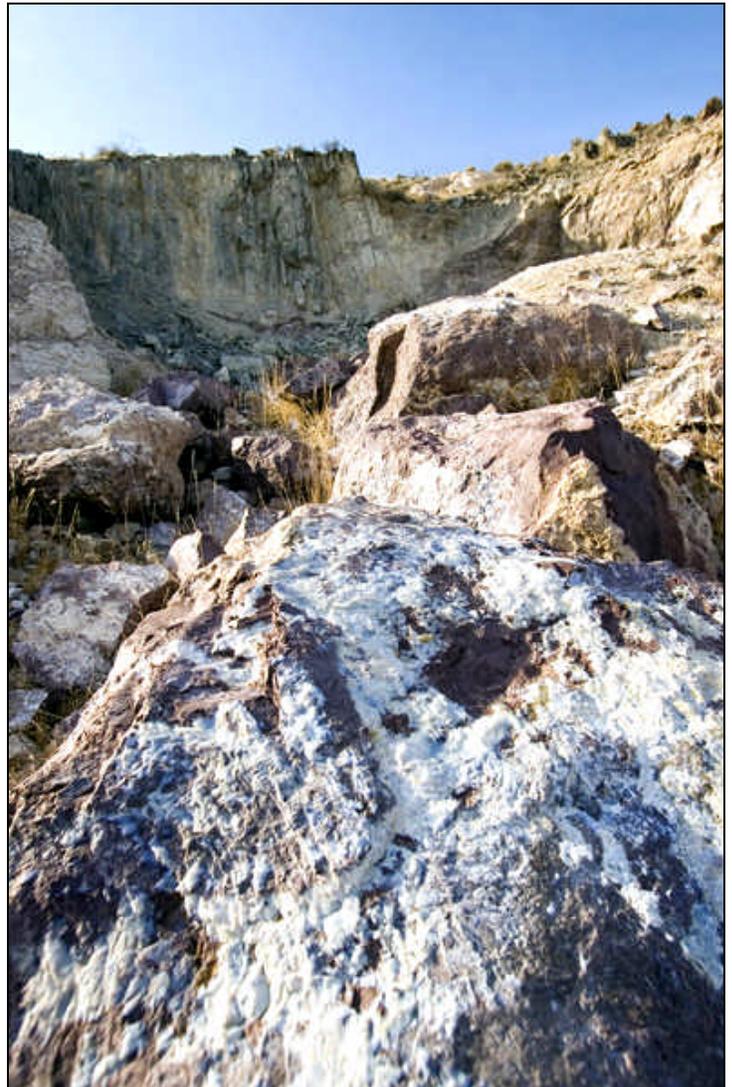
Riverside and San Bernardino counties are home to spectacular collecting areas that attract both rockhounds and lapidary shops to supply them.

Depending on interest level, beginners can go to an area and start by picking up pieces of interesting rock. People with a deeper interest could start by visiting a lapidary supply shop for equipment and information. More serious collectors should consider joining a local club.

**GEAR TO CARRY:** A good guidebook is your best rockhounding gear. A guide will give ideas of where to go and show how to identify and collect specimens. A small hand lens will help with identifying specimens.

A rock hammer is used for general digging and splitting rocks. It is like a regular hammer on one side but has a pointed pick on the other and is the main tool for rockhounds.

Eye protection is necessary equipment. Optionally, consider taking a chisel, a sledgehammer or maul, a miner's pick and a shovel. These



Tailing dumps of abandoned mines are loaded with beautiful specimens that would otherwise be inaccessible.

help extract tougher specimens and the shovel doubles for digging out a stuck car.

**DESERT TRAVEL :** A map is necessary to avoid getting lost. The BLM's Cuddeback Lake map is one of the better ones. As well, a GPS with mapping software is helpful for locating hard-to-find turnoffs.

The roads to Opal Mountain are currently in good shape but are rough with washboard. Four-wheel drive is recommended, but a high-clearance two-wheel drive vehicle would be adequate with necessary precautions.

As usual in the desert, be prepared for possible problems. Do not travel alone and bring extra water, food and warm clothing in case of an unexpected overnight stay. Make sure to check that the spare tire and jack are in good condition and that all fluids are full before leaving.

Also bring a tow rope, jumper cables and extra fluids in an emergency kit. Cell phone service is available near Opal Mountain.

**TIPS FOR FINDING OPAL:** Opals are found in milky white, green and clear veins in other rocks. At Opal Mountain, it's found mostly in the reddish-brown rhyolite common to the area. Much of it can be found lying on the ground due to natural action or previous digging activity.

Since opal is softer than the surrounding rock, do not try to dig it out directly. It will shatter into dust. Instead try to break out the surrounding rock to extract nice specimens.

Stay away from open mine shafts and respect active mining claims. On the other hand, the tailing dumps of abandoned mines are loaded with interesting and beautiful specimens that would otherwise be inaccessible.

Inspect translucent opal specimens from many angles relative to the sun to search for small flashes of colored light. The small bits of precious opal are uncommon but make the trip worth it.

While there, keep an eye out for jasper, a red, brown or yellow form of quartz with a glassy sheen. Look out for geodes as well. These are generally round, hollow stones with crystals and concentric rings of agate inside them.

**WHAT TO BRING:** Map, Water, Snack, Hat, Sunscreen, Guide book, Daypack, Hand lens or magnifying glass, Rock pick

**MINERALS:** Opal, jasper, chalcedony, geodes.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Interstate 15 in Barstow, take Highway 58 west for eight miles. Turn north on Hinkley Road and go 7.5 miles to the fork. Go right on unsigned dirt road C099 and go 3.9 miles. Turn left at Opal Mountain Road (C297), just after road C296. Go 5.6 miles to the Opal Mountain area.

**REGULATIONS:** Rockhounding is allowed on public lands not otherwise closed to rock collecting. Rocks can be collected on private land with permission. Do not take more than can be carried in a daypack. No vertebrate fossils or archaeological artifacts may be taken.

**MORE INFORMATION:** <http://www.blm.gov/ca/barstow/rock.html>

From The Press-Enterprise, <http://www.pe.com>

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**Here are some very good articles on the famous Opal Rush of Moscow, Idaho in 1890. Also, be sure to read the article from the June 2009 Issue of the Opal Express: "The Discovery of Precious Opal at Whelan, Washington". If anyone has information on the current status of these deposits, please contact the editor. The Editor**

## Those Idaho Opals

**Young William Lessure's Find That His Father Despised.**

*Moscow (Idaho) Letter to the Spokane Spokesman.*

A year ago William Lessure dug a well near his house. The volcanic rock that underlies the alluvial deposit in all this - Palouse country was thrown in nieces beside the well. Mr. Lessure's only son, some thirteen years old, began finding beautiful stones in the volcanic formation. His father said it was glass, but the boy

persisted. "I know they are worth a good deal, because they are so pretty," the boy would say.

For a year he has been hunting for the pretty stones. His father scolded him and told him to go to work at something useful; but the boy hung around the well. He went down into it and threw up loose volcanic rock, and these he broke to pieces looking for the pretty stones. The father began to despair of ever making a useful man out of the son.

Last Saturday Mr. Allen, a jeweler, was out hunting. He stopped at the Lessure well for a drink. As he raised the cup to his lip he saw something sparkle in the rock before him. His experienced eye told him that he had found a beautiful opal.

Mr. Allen glanced around him, and it was not long before he was staking a mineral claim on William Lessure's ranch 600 feet wide and 1,500 long with all the etceteras of corner stakes and the notice that he had located a mineral claim there. Mr. Lessure was astonished to see his valuable land taken without so much as by your leave. He was simply paralyzed when Sunday came, and with it hundreds of Moscow people. Lawyers, doctors, real estate men, and nearly everybody else went on William Lessure's ranch and began staking mineral claims. Mr. Lessure was not in it. He was told that he would be given bonds to indemnify him for the loss of his land, and he acquiesced for the time. Not less than 600 acres in all were staked that day. Some of it school land and some belongs to neighboring ranchers.

The formation where the opals are found is a volcanic one. At Lessure's well there is about seven feet of earth. Then comes a soft volcanic rock, which is easily removed. It is porous, with air spaces running through it. The white opal is found through this formation. Next beneath is a hard volcanic rock, very difficult to work. The beautiful specimens so freely exhibited here are found in this rock, it is not known how far down it extends.

The excitement over the discovery at Lessure's has caused a revival of the talk about the earth formation through the Palouse country. Below the surface here at Moscow there is ample evidence that a well-defined surface forty feet below the existing surface once bore a luxuriant vegetation. Not a well is dug in Moscow but old logs in various stages of decomposition are found and have to be removed. Once, in a well forty feet in the lava formation, a peach pit was found. Wise people say that the great tragedy of Pompeii and Herculaneum had been preceded by one infinitely more terrible in the Palouse country, and lava and ashes from great Volcanoes, now long since effaced, had been poured out on the plain. At some stage or the game nature went into the opal business and scattered her product in the lava. But all this is for wise people to decide.

*From the New York Times, Published: October 14, 1890*

## On the Occurrence of Fire Opal in A Basalt in Washington State

*By George Frederic Kunz*

During the month of August 1890, James Allen, a jeweler of Yonkers, New York, detected fire opal on a pile of rock that had been taken out of a well at a depth of twenty-two feet on the farm of William Lessure, near Whelan, near the state line of Washington, twenty miles southwest of Colfax, Washington State, and adjoining Moscow Idaho, in latitude 47 Deg., longitude 117 deg, midway between the Coeur d'Alena and the Nez Percés Indian reservation. It was found more or less plentifully, as the last four feet of the rock contained cavities filled with fire opal.

The opal occurs in altered and also unaltered basalt. In the former most, if not all, of the feldspar and pyroxene, as well as the green mass, appears to be altered. Some original constituent may have changed, but whether or not it is olivine is difficult to determine because of the crystal aggregate character of the pseudomorph. The pieces varied from the size of a half pea to that of a hen's egg. The material is found in a vesicular lava. The smaller nodules are

very rich in color, but the larger ones often have little or no play of color.

The opal may have been formed simultaneously with the formation of the rock, or rather at a time that would be favorable to the formation of zeolites. The quality of some of the small specimens examined was very fine, and if the material is so extensive as supposed and is properly worked it is likely to be one of the most promising of our precious stones, from a financial point of view.

*From the Bulletin of the Geological Society of America Vol. 2, 1890*

## Tourists Duped in Fake Opal Scam

By Tory Shepherd, [The Advertiser](#), May 22, 2009

**FAKE opals are being peddled to tourists in Coober Pedy.**

As the quality of the synthetic stones improves, they are being sold to unwary customers.

It is understood slabs of the synthetic material are made overseas and shipped in before being processed and sold.

Customers only find out they have been duped if they take their stone to be valued.

Federal Member for Grey Rowan Ramsey says genuine opal dealers want to put a stop to the practice because it is damaging the industry's reputation and driving down prices.

"It's clearly illegal, but it's difficult to police," he said.

"The synthetics now are very good. If a young couple was to buy a diamond engagement ring only to find out it's cubic zirconia, they'd be pretty disappointed."

Mr Ramsey has been meeting with the Coober Pedy Opal Miners Association and the Jewellers Association of Australia to discuss a possible accreditation for opals and an industry code of practice.

He says any synthetic opals would then have to be clearly identified as such.

Local bed-and-breakfast owner Ken Male showed *The Advertiser* a synthetic opal, which had deep colours but felt like plastic.

It would be processed, sliced, put on a backing and set in jewellery so the difference was concealed, he said.

Mr Male said he knew of two or three stores selling fake opals as real.

"The ordinary person wouldn't have a clue," he said.

"We know it goes on in the industry but there's nothing we as individuals can do except try to make the public aware."

He said many people in the town were concerned about damage to their reputation.

"It's bad news... because people come here and expect to purchase genuine opal and they walk away with synthetic opal," he said.



A synthetic opal, left, and the real thing. Source: *The Advertiser*

## Comments on this story

**Jim of North Adelaide** Posted May 22, 2009

Are opals still in fashion? Anyway if you can't tell the difference what does it matter?

**Coober Pedy Resident of Coober Pedy** Posted May 22, 2009

What a load of BULLSxxT! How can a professional journalist put something like this in the paper? Coober Pedy is one of the places that a tourist can buy (authentic) opal cheaper than anywhere else. Most of the people selling opal in Coober Pedy have been there for a long time and THIS IS THEIR LIFE. THEY LOVE OPAL! If there are one or two opal shops that sell synthetic you can not rubbish the whole town. There are more than 30 opal shops! Your paper should apologize to Coober Pedy and the people involved in the opal industry!

**Willem van den Broek of Vietnam** Posted May 22, 2009

A simple solution would be to strike a match and hold it close to the opal, before buying. If it melts it is fake. I have done this many times when buying gemstones and on a few occasions the seller asked me: What are you doing? Adding you can't do that! Obviously they were trying to sell me a fake. So buyer beware.

From <http://www.adelaidenow.com.au>

**Opal Miners from Andamooka have told me that they know as a fact that some of the same opal deposits of Andamooka are within the adjacent Woomera government area. Should raise a lot of opal mining interest. The Editor**

## Woomera Mining Rules Sought

By Sarah-Jane Tasker

From: *The Australian*, December 11, 2009

SOUTH Australia's mining industry group is demanding the federal government clarify which areas can be mined in the Woomera weapons testing area, after several projects involving Chinese companies were rejected.

The government rejected China Minmetals' takeover bid for the struggling OZ Minerals because its Prominent Hill mine was in the prohibited zone.

Junior explorer Western Plains Resources is still fighting for its \$45 million iron ore deal with China, after the Defence Department moved to stop a deal with Wugang Australian Resources because it involved the explorer's Hawks Nest project in the Woomera prohibited area.

South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy chief executive Jason Kuchel said that about 10 months ago the group had requested that the Defence Department, the state government and mining industry representatives sit down to work through some of the issues with Woomera, but the miners had been excluded from the talks.

The group was involved in some briefings, he said, but were still not fully informed or aware of the state of play.

"It has got to a point where we need to be involved in the talks and know what the situation is, and we need that clarity," he said.

"We have companies waiting, trying to get access, and they are simply in a holding pattern."

Most of the 127,000 sq km of the Woomera Prohibited Area -- the world's largest defence range -- is covered by more than 120 mineral exploration leases issued by the South Australian government, with lease access approvals controlled by the federal government.

The area hosts a large part of the Coober Pedy opal fields and the operating Challenger and Prominent Hill mines.

Mr Kuchel said a set of rules from the Defence Department was needed, so the industry could know what hurdles companies had to jump.

The companies should also have the opportunity to show whether they could meet Defence's security concerns, he said.

From <http://www.theaustralian.com.au>

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## May 2010 Gem & Mineral Shows

More shows can be found at

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

7-9--COSTA MESA, CA: Show, "Gem Faire"; Gem Faire Inc.; OC Fair & Event Center/Bldg. 10, 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; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

12--McCLELLAN, CA: Show, "Rings & Things BeadTour"; Rings & Things; Garden Pavilion, 5640 Dudley Blvd.; Wed. 12-4; free admission; gemstones, bead strands, wholesale prices, findings, stringing supplies; contact Dave Robertson, P.O. Box 450, McClellan, CA 95652, (800) 366-2156; email: drobertson@rings-things.com; Web site: www.rings-things.com

13--SAN MATEO, CA: Show, "Rings & Things BeadTour"; Rings & Things; San Mateo County Event Center (Event Center Meeting Pavilion), 2495 S. DE St.; Thu. 1-5; free admission; gemstones, bead strands, wholesale prices, findings, stringing supplies; contact Dave Robertson, P.O. Box 450, Spokane, WA 99210, (800) 366-2156; e-mail: drobertson@rings-things.com; Web site: www.rings-things.com

14-16--ANDERSON, CA: Show, "Northern CA Treasures"; Superior CA Gem & Mineral Association; Shasta County Fair Grounds, 1890 Biggs St.; Fri. 9-5, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-4; free admission; contact Bob Davis, 5810 Olive Rd., Corning, CA 96021, (530) 824-6214; e-mail: mcdavis@hughes.net; Web site: www.superiorcal.com

14-16--POMONA, CA: Spring show, "West Coast Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show"; Martin Zinn Expositions LLC; the Fairplex in Pomona, 1101 W. McKinley Ave.; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$5; 110 wholesale and retail dealers; contact Martin Zinn Expositions, P.O. Box 665, Bernalillo, NM 87004-0665, fax (303) 223-3478; email: mzexpos@aol.com; Web site: www.mzexpos.com

14-16--SACRAMENTO, CA: Show, "Gem Faire"; Gem Faire Inc.; Cal Expo/Bldg. A, 1600 Exposition 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

15--BUENA PARK, CA: Show, "Rings & Things BeadTour"; Rings & Things; Knott's Berry Farm Resort Hotel, 7675 Crescent Ave.; Sat. 10-2; free admission; gemstones, bead strands, wholesale prices, findings, stringing supplies; contact Dave Robertson, P.O. Box 450, Spokane, WA 99210, (800)

366-2156; e-mail: drobertson@rings-things.com; Web site: www.rings-things.com

16--SAN BERNARDINO, CA: Show, "Rings & Things BeadTour"; Rings & Things; Hilton San Bernardino, The Inland Ballroom, 285 E. Hospitality Ln.; Sun. 10-2; free admission; gemstones, bead strands, wholesale prices, findings, stringing supplies; contact Dave Robertson, (800) 366-2156; e-mail: drobertson@rings-things.com; Web site: www.rings-things.com

18--MESA, AZ: Show, "Rings & Things BeadTour"; Rings & Things; Holiday Inn & Suites (Superstition Ballroom), 1600 S. Country Club Dr.; Tue. 12-4; free admission; gemstones, bead strands, wholesale prices, findings, stringing supplies; contact Dave Robertson, P.O. Box 450, Spokane, WA 99210, (800) 366-2156; email: drobertson@rings-things.com; Web site: www.rings-things.com

20--ALBUQUERQUE, NM: Show, "Rings & Things BeadTour"; Rings & Things; MCM Elegante Hotel, 2020 Menaul NE; Thu. 12-4; free admission; gemstones, bead strands, wholesale prices, findings, stringing supplies; contact Dave Robertson, (800) 366-2156; e-mail: drobertson@rings-things.com; Web site: www.rings-things.com

21-23--SANTA BARBARA, CA: Show, "Gem Faire"; Gem Faire Inc.; Earl Warren Showgrounds/Exhibit Hall, 3400 Calle Real; 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

28-30--HARTFORD, CT: Show; International Gem & Jewelry Show Inc.; CT Expo Center, 265 Rev. Moody Overpass; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 11-5; adults \$8; open to the public, professional jewelers, artists; contact International Gem & Jewelry Show Inc., 120 Derwood Circle, Rockville, MD 20850, (301) 294-1640; e-mail: info@intergem.net; Web site: www.InterGem.com

29-30--LAKESIDE, AZ: Annual show; White Mountain Gem & Mineral Club; Blue Ridge Junior High School, 3050 N. Porter Mountain Rd.; Sat. 9-6, Sun. 9-4; adults \$2, students (15 and under) free with paying adult; dealers, gems, minerals, beads, fossils, lapidary equipment, rough and finished rock specimens, silent auction, spinning wheel, kids' activity area, door prizes, raffle prizes, display cases, fluorescent mineral display; contact Larry Legge/Nanz Marshall, (928) 537-2524; e-mail: larrylegge@yahoo.com; Web site: www.whitemountain-azrockclub.org

29-30--TONOPAH, NV: 40th annual show, "Jim Butler Days"; Tonopah Rock & Mineral Club; Tonopah Convention Center; Sat. 9:30-5, Sun. 9:30-3; gems, minerals, jewelry, fossils, bottles, in conjunction with the NV State Mining Championships; contact Robert Otteson, P.O. Box 3493, Tonopah, NV 89049

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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:  
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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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Please sign here:

Date:

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**Are Your Dues Due Now?**  
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 Thank you,  
 The Editor



# The Opal Express

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

**Volume #43 Issue #5  
May 2010**

### Some Topics In This Issue:

- Mojave Desert Opal Diggings
- Collectible Specimens in the Mojave
- Those Idaho Opals
- Occurrence of Fire Opal in Washington
- Tourists Duped in Fake Opal Scam
- Woomera Mining Rules Sought

TO:

### Important Dates:

May 10 - Board Meeting

May 13 - General Meeting

Jim Pisani on Fluorescent Minerals  
with an Emphasis on Opal

# May 13

## **Jim Pisani on Fluorescent Minerals with an Emphasis on Opal**

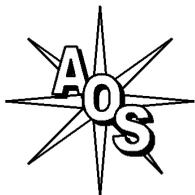
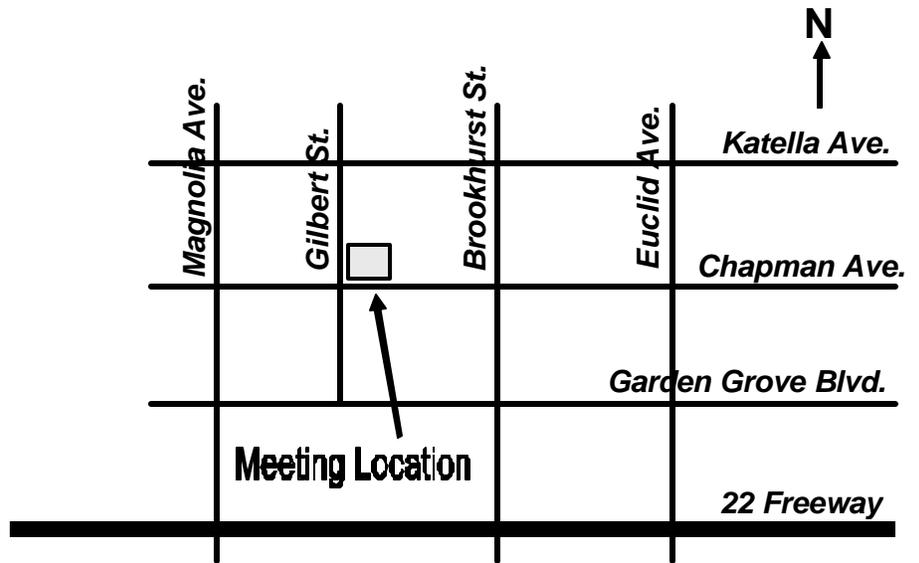
### — GENERAL MEETINGS —

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



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