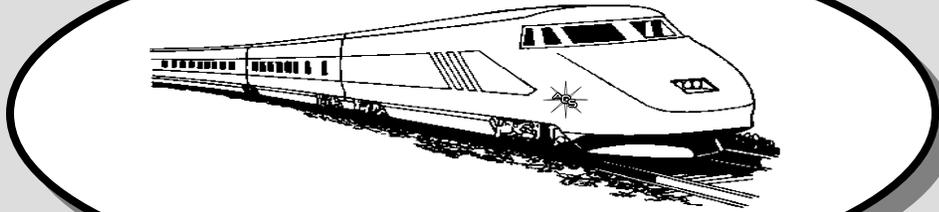


The Opal Express

Published monthly by
The
American
Opal
Society



June 2010

Volume 43 Issue 6

Table of Contents

President's Message	1
Members Only Website Password	1
I Am a Rockhound	1
Fifth AOS Live Auction on June 10th	2
Bidder Agreement	2
AOS Live Auction Rules	2
Felton Jeweler finds 175-pound Common Opal in Idaho	2
Knapping Juniper Ridge Opal	5
Bates Brothers Oregon Trip - June-July 2006	6
June 2010 Gem & Mineral Shows	7

President's Message

By Pete Goetz

Well, as promised, Jim Pisani's lecture on the fluorescence of various minerals was very clear, concise and educational. The samples he showed were well worth the trip to the meeting. Hope to hear more from him in the future.

This month, the month of June, we will be having our infamous **Live Opal Auction**. Soooo.. bring some goodies, make some money, but most importantly have some fun.

The Anaheim Arts Council has been kind enough to once again award the AOS a grant for the 2010-2011 season. I will discuss this at the meeting.

We are still looking for volunteers for our annual show. It would be great if some of you would step-up to the plate.

Happy Opals, Pete Goetz

Members Only Website Password

The password for the members only area is "flash".

I Am a Rockhound

By Charles (Chuck) Weber

I guess I am a rockhound. The article "[You Might Be a Rockhound](#)" [Lithosphere; April 1996] helped me cast aside my hesitation, inhibitions, and waffling, and boldly, confidently declare that I am a genuine rockhound.

It is not that I haven't claimed to be one for tens of years. It started when, as a boy, I collected flint arrowheads in the Ozarks of Missouri. I remember being fascinated with the fossil shells embedded in the limestone along the roadside.

My activity took a more serious turn when I first collected nodules in the Wiley Well area during the middle thirties. I even, with the help of a high school student, made a mud slabbing saw. I made an arbor with Chevrolet wheel bearings and connected it to a used

washing machine motor. Commercial equipment was not available to amateurs in those days. If it had been, I wouldn't have had the money to purchase it.

All this time I imagined I was a rockhound. I confess I claimed I was a rockhound. I even boasted that I was. But I also confess I was haunted by the fear that I didn't fully qualify. My boasting was largely a compensation to cover up an inferiority complex.

I couldn't explain the ages or the strata like a geologist. I couldn't identify minerals, pronounce their names -- I couldn't even spell the names -- as mineralogists did. I was not knowledgeable about such characteristics as luster, brilliance, or the chemical content of gems as gemologists were. H₂O was about all I knew about chemistry. I cut a few hundred cabochons and faceted a few gems, but have never had the nerve to try any cuts other than simple brilliants and emeralds.

To cover up all these deficiencies, I have repeatedly boasted that I am a rockhound. Despite the fact that there's a "ton" of who-knows-what rocks in bins around my garage, and the garage has three diamond saws (ranging from 18" to a trim saw), two tumblers, a grinding arbor, and a Crystalite Demon, and the hobby room has two faceting machines and sundry other jewelry-making tools, I still felt uncertain.

The article convinced me I wasn't playing the hypocrite. I am a rockhound. I have been liberated. I don't need to cover up or pretend. I am a rockhound.

I have collected in every state west of the Mississippi except the Dakotas and in a number of states east of the old river, too. I have dug until my hands were blistered, hiked until I was weary, climbed mountains, walked the beaches, and even collected when snow was on the ground.

When I spent eight weeks going around the world in connection with my work, I used every opportunity between meetings and conferences looking for stones. If I saw a gravel pile, I checked it out.

One morning in Beersheba (Israel) I looked out the window of my hotel room and saw a gravel pile. In five minutes I was downstairs checking it out. A colleague of mine saw me and snapped a picture of me going through the pile. In the plane I would save the plastic bags that held the silverware to store my stones. I would use one of my business cards to identify and keep my stones separate. As a result, when I got home I had specimens from France, Germany, Switzerland, Greece, Israel, Egypt, Lebanon, India, and other countries. Some of it is just rock, but there are specimens of wood, jasper, agate, and artifacts from the Taj Mahal in India, Athens, Greece, and Byblos.

Shucks! I was just having fun. But I see now, all these activities were a dead giveaway. I am a confirmed rockhound.

From the Lithosphere (May 1996); Fallbrook Gem and Mineral Society, Inc.; Fallbrook, CA

Fifth AOS Live Auction on June 10th

The AOS will hold its fifth AOS live auction, on Thursday, June 10 at our general meeting at 7:00. The auction will be fun, and "fund-raising," so come and snag a bargain while supporting your club!! **There were many great bargains to be had at the event last year!**

Don't miss a chance to buy or sell opal rough, cabs, books, tools, display cases, and other neat gem stuff when members may bring up to 5 items each for sale, as long as they are gem-related, and are approved by the AOS Board of Directors. You must be an AOS member to sell at the auction, and you must sign a vendor agreement, printed here for preview. Vendors must donate 10 percent of the final price to the AOS, and will be paid after the refreshment break prior to close of meeting. We will arrive at 6:30 to help vendors prepare their items. If you have items for sale, please come early, and allow us to assign a Lot Number, any minimum "Reserve" price you may request, and log your items into our computer for easy checkout later!

Bidders may be members, or visitors, provided they have a photo ID like a driver's license, and are willing to abide by Bidder rules. You must have an official bid paddle to bid, so sign up early when you first get to the mtg. Copies of the Vendor Rules and Bidder Rules will be made available at the signup table when you arrive.

If you want to bid, you must sign in to get a paddle, and agree to the Bidder rules, which state that all items must be paid for prior to close of meeting, the highest bid wins, all sales are final, no returns or refunds. The AOS auctioneer has final authority to determine the high bid, and can accept or reject any bid at AOS discretion. Bidders cannot bid for another person, and must pay for and remove their auction items prior to the end of the meeting. Bidders are not permitted to loan their paddles to others.

Proceeds from the live auction will go toward AOS activities like our workshop, and our annual show preparation and advertising. Please be generous with your bids, and get a bargain at the same time!

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Bidder Agreement

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

By signing Bidder Agreement Sign-Up form, and accepting bid paddle, bidder agrees to the terms and conditions of the American Opal Society's auction rules and regulations, as described herein, and any laws of the State of California that may pertain. Bidder agrees that auction bid constitutes a legally binding contract and that s/he is obligated legally to pay the total amount of his bid(s) in full to the American Opal Society, henceforth to be known as the AOS, at auction close, in cash or check (with photo ID), prior to taking possession of any auction item(s). Bidder agrees NOT to bid on his own items, nor act in the capacity of a shill or confederate with regard to any other auction vendor, bidder, or item presented. Bidder agrees that s/he is at least 18 years of age, and enters into this agreement willingly, and has read this agreement in full, that he has carefully examined all auction items, and that all items are sold "AS IS, WHERE IS," with no warranty implied or expressed, CAVEAT EMPTOR. Bidder further agrees that by his signature, s/he agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the AOS from any claim resulting from auction or auction item(s). S/he also agrees that any claim at all shall be arbitrated by an ombudsman mutually agreeable to both parties, and who conducts business in the County of Orange, California.

AOS Live Auction Rules

1. Winning bid is final, and all sales are final, no returns or refunds.
2. High bidder awarded possession of auction item(s) at the sole discretion of the AOS designated auctioneer and the AOS Board of Directors.

3. Winning bidder to take possession of any and all items s/he wins immediately after payment in full, and prior to auction close, at his expense, and remove said items from the auction area and the building prior to the end of the scheduled meeting.
4. The AOS reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids made.
5. Bidder will not transfer or loan or assign his bid paddle and rights to any other party.
6. Auctioneer may, at the discretion of the AOS Board of Directors, bid as any bidder would, and agrees to abide by same terms, conditions, and rules stipulated herein.

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Felton Jeweler finds 175-pound Common Opal in Idaho

By Alia Wilson, 3/1/2010

FELTON - An amateur miner hopes to sell what he believes is one of the largest common fire opals in America uncovered near his farm in Idaho.

Jim Hartrim, a local gem jeweler, was tending his property in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, when he got a call from friends of a possible discovery. While digging for gravel to build a road in October, a friend struck a hard stone with his backhoe. The reddish-brown stone caught his attention. The property rests on a platform of basalt or volcanic rock. Opals are a gem known for being a byproduct of lava flow.

Hartrim managed to break off the 175-pound chunk of rock he thinks is common fire opal by placing his car jack under the protruding piece and cranking it until it

snapped. After some finagling, he loaded the 22 inch high, 25 inch wide, 8 inch thick chunk into the back of his Subaru and brought it to California to add to his collection of jade, agate, jasper, turquoise and other gems and stones.

After finding the rock, he started researching more about common fire opals and could not find any record of a larger one. The largest he could find was in Mexico and weighed a few hundred grams.

"I know a gallon bucket of small pieces can cost up to \$300," Hartrim said. "You can find common fire opal in Oregon mines. You can mine all day and find tiny pieces but I don't know of any as large as this."

Hartrim's housemate, Jesse Hall, a member of the Santa Cruz Mineral and Gem Society, was thrilled to hear about his friend's find. The two share a yard filled with gems and stones.

"This is about the size of a hubcap and is 8 inches thick," Hall said. "We kept it in our yard and started to realize that it may be worth something after doing some research."

Fire opals are transparent to translucent opals with yellow, orange, orange-yellow or red colors and they do not usually show any "play of color," Hall said.



Jesse Hall props up the 175-pound opal slab found in northern Idaho (Robinson Kuntz/Sentinel)

Claudia Couture, owner of Spencer Opal Mines in Spencer, Idaho,, said although common fire opal is not worth a lot of money, the size did make the find unique. The Spencer opal mine, the largest privately owned gem stone producer in Idaho, is the major producer of opal in the state.

"It certainly would be interesting for someone who is into carving large pieces such as this one," Couture said. "I was a little disappointed to learn that it was not precious fire opal but regardless it's a fun thing to have."

Hartrim plans to develop a mine in Coeur d' Alene where he found the opal in search of other large pieces. He hopes to sell it to a jeweler or museum but is unsure on an appropriate price. If his find is rare, he would like to see it preserved in its natural form.

"I think it would be great to put this on display for a lot of people to see," Hartrim said. "I could make 7,000 medallions and necklaces and be an opal dealer with this but I want the world to know that this is out there. I'd like to see it in the Smithsonian."

From http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/ci_14490234

Queensland Opal Towns & Fields Home of Boulder Opal

The Queensland Opal fields are spread over a belt 300-400km wide with a 1000 km strike. Trending in a north-westerly direction from the New South Wales border at Hungerford up to Kynuna and stretching west of Cunnamulla, Blackall and Winton out to Noccundra, Palarrara and Hamilton. Opaline silica is common throughout this deeply weathered section of the Winton Formation which consists of



[Lark Quarry](#) dinosaur stampede

sedimentary sandstone, siltstone and mudstone. Ironstone concretions or 'boulders' are also widely distributed throughout these Cretaceous sediments and may be randomly distributed or confined to definite 'levels'.

Seemingly untouched by man since the beginning of time, the vast, rugged landscape of the western region of the State has a rich history. More than 25 Aboriginal tribes roamed the country before the arrival of the pioneer pastoralists and Opal miners in the mid to late 1800's. Today huge sheep and cattle stations, mineral deposits, oil and gas fields contrast with the lifestyle of the nomadic Opal miner.

Precious Australian Opal was first found in Queensland where it occurs over of an area in excess of 100,000 square kilometres, in a multitude of forms and varieties. Making Southwest Queensland the greatest region of Opalisation in the world and the most prospective in the new millennium.

Lady Brassey in her book "The Last Voyage, to India & Australia, in the 'Sunbeam'" mentions that a piece of Opal was found by the overseer at Blackall Station on Listowel Downs, in 1869.

The beautiful fragment stood on the mantelpiece for several years before it was thought to be of any value, but at the time of the greatest mining fever attention was attracted to the specimen, and it was sent to a mineralogist, who pronounced it to be valuable Opal.

The Opal Express

The American Opal Society

The Opal encrusted ironstone boulders discovered on the jump ups of the Barcoo district by early miners Berkelman and Lambert attracted great interest at the Queensland Annexe of the London International Gem Exhibition in 1873 and became known internationally as 'Barcoo Opal'. Following the discovery of further deposits hundreds of kilometres to the north near Kynuna entrepreneur Herbert Bond infamously formed a syndicate with the intention of marketing Queensland Boulder Opal to the world.

However, by the end of the 1870s, pioneer miner Joe Bridel had discovered a new form of precious Opal at *Stoney Creek* in the Kyabra Hills that lie north-west of Quilpie and to the south of Windorah. It was the solid seams, 'pipes' and nodules of precious Opal from this sandstone Opal that the pioneering Opal marketeer Tullie Cornthwaite Wollaston took to London in 1890 which was familiar yet superior in quality to any Opal the world had known hitherto and helped initiate the Australian Opal industry.

Today Queensland's Opal miners are above all in search of Boulder Opal, this 'heavenly marriage of ironstone and Opal' is widely regarded as one of the planet's most stirringly beautiful gemstones, particularly amongst the cognescenti.

Despite an apparent abundance of the resource in Queensland, Boulder Opal constitutes only a minor percentage of total Australian Opal production. The 'tyranny of distance' and the technical difficulty in the economic extraction and cutting of this most brilliant of gemstones are challenges which remain to be addressed as we celebrate 140 years of the Gem's first recorded discovery.

Winton – Northern Capital of Qld Opal Fields

The Winton Mining Area encompasses a vast region of intermittent Opalisation, famous for patches of brilliant black boulder Opal pancakes. Also home to 'Lark Quarry' - a fossilised dinosaur stampede, which showcases three different species' footprints. Luckily discovered by an Opal prospector and now preserved as a major tourist attraction.

Opalton –124 km south of Winton, was discovered in 1887 by George Cragg, a 17 year old stockman on Warrambool Downs. Almost a decade passed before the commencement of mining on this field which proved to contain the highest concentration of Opal in Queensland.



Opalton



Winton Opal Country

Today, a population of less than 20 inhabit what is a designated fossicking reserve, host to the most extensive Opal workings in Queensland, where once a township of nearly 600 people flourished.

The field includes numerous historical mines; *Brilliant, Little Wonder, Bald Knob, Snake Jump, Conways, Dragon Fly, Kinder...*

The largest piece of gem Opal ever recorded in the world was found at Opalton in 1899 by Dick Shillington and his mate Greenwood. It was 11 ft long, as thick as a man's thigh and took four men to carry it.

Working the Gem, an Opal cutter at Opalton in 1901 (pictured) has rigged up an old treadle sewing machine. Others used bicycles, designing innovative hand or foot operated cutting and polishing wheels.



Black Boulder Opal

This magnificent Black Boulder Opal (pictured) is possessed of an uncanny stripey-pattern, it is multicolored with a predominance of purple and red. The stone was found in the crust of a football sized boulder at 18ft by Rosie Petrie and Hans Klinger in 1993, it was specked by their dog Fritz in an open-cut at Opalton! Feelin Lucky Mate? Try your luck 'noodling' in the

Opalton fossicking reserve!

Why not stay in a cabin or your own caravan, for more details contact the Opalton Outpost.

Mayneside - 'Opal Creek' area just south of Opalton and north of Mayneside Homestead was the greatest producer in the last 20 years, producing gem quality sandstone Boulder Opal with glorious patterns and dark colouring. Mayneside is host to numerous prospects, with the finest ironstone pancakes generally found in smaller concentrations and sporadic pockets;; *Carbine, Yellow Jimmy, Wild Horse, Mud Mine, Tyson, Quartpot, Breadbox, Mayneside...* further south in the Horse Creek - Vergemont area *Arch Mine, Canadians, HOpal* and more recently *Red October* and *Twin Peaks...*

Jundah - Field (396 S of Winton) includes *Jundah, Lina Glen, Opalville* and *Hayfield* mines, and Stonehenge - Evengy Station to

the south-west. The area is renowned for red colored Opal in large sandy boulders and manganese Black Opal pipes.

The *Black Mine* was Australia's first discovered Black Opal deposit and is significant as it was 10 years before Lightning Ridge appeared in the annals of history. In 1900 there were several hundred men idle in Jundah during the drought. With no other prospects many went gouging, it is said there were 100 miners working at Opalville & Black Mine at the turn of the twentieth century.

The Opal found was mostly nodules and cylindrical pipes in the band at the junction of the sandstone and clay. They ranged in size from that of a small pencil to 2 metres in length and many were more than 10 centimetres in diameter. The larger pipes were generally filled with potch and a hard red brick-like material, occasionally carrying a little colour. They were so numerous the miners nicknamed them 'brick pipes'. It was a rare pipe which was full of colour. Most of the better pipes contained at least 90% potch,



Old Miner at Opalton

the remainder being high-quality Opal in isolated patches throughout the potch.

Kynuna - Northern-most of the Queensland Opal fields (200 NW of Winton), the main field was discovered in 1894 and lies 40 km south of Kynuna township off the Landsborough Highway.

This vast area of potential Opalisation has been worked very little and is perhaps the deepest Opal profile in Queensland. The Opal country is dominated by sandstone mesas in areas which are highly elevated (320 m ASL) suggesting up to 35m to the bottom level. The prospective areas thereabouts are west of the main Kynuna field and south toward Dagworth Station.

Middleton - Numerous Mines surround the Middleton Pub (169 km W of Winton) on Woodstock, Chiltern Hills, Franklin and Brighton Stations.

Windorah - Mt. Windsor to the west of Jundah. Palparrara and Curren to the south west.

Quilpie - 'Gateway to the Opal Fields'

In 1871 the first Opal lease in Australia was registered south of Quilpie. Very little work was carried out on the 360 acre lease other than the sinking a couple of shallow shafts, and the lease was abandoned after several seasons. Twenty years later, the discovery of *Duck Creek* further south brought renewed interest in the area, the lease was re-peged and named *Pride of the Hills*.

Toompine - The Paroo Fields, as they are known, lie east and south-east of Toompine Pub (77 km S of Quilpie); including the famous *Pride of the Hills, Lushingtons, Coparella, Sheep Station Creek, Emu Creek* and *Duck Creek*.

Duck Creek is a small (=1km²) gem Crystal Opal field (85 km N of Yowah) discovered in 1891. Renowned for seam Opal of the highest quality, possessed of a brilliance surpassing that of almost all other crystal Opal on the Queensland fields.

Quilpie - West and north-west of Quilpie; The vast Quilpie Mining Area is home to several of the most productive Opal mines in history, the famously prolific *Hayricks*, *Bull Creek* and *Pinkilla* Mines are still operating today. The region is noted for producing considerable volumes of large boulders. These contain predominantly Light Boulder Opal which often runs into smaller amounts of Black Boulder Opal.

Bulgroo - Further north of Quilpie field in the Cheviot Range, the mines include *Bulgroo (Germans)* and still further north west



Gem Yowah Nut

Budgerigar and Trinidades.

Yaraka - This field encompasses the mines on and west of the Macedon Range (165km W of Blackall): Including the mighty *Mount Tighe*, *Highlands*, and *Harlequin*. This area is other-worldly, looking out over the open country between the ridges from the mine at the highly uplifted top of Mount Tighe is truly an amazing view to behold.

Eromanga - "Farthest Town from the Sea" but just a hop and a skip to the *Scotchman* and some 'bloody ripper', 'you beaut' Opals! Also the namesake of the Eromanga Sea, the great inland Sea, that once covered much of the forming continent and the outline of which hosts the vast Boulder Opal fields.

Numerous discoveries were made in the area from the mid 1870's and the miners brought Cobb & Co. to Windorah helping to establish Eromanga, essentially Australia's first Opal mining town, with two hotels and a police station. However due to the sparsity of the surrounding deposits Eromanga was eclipsed and the monicker taken by Whitecliffs in a little under two decades.

By 1878 over 200 men were combing the 'Kyabra' hills to the West and Keerongooloo Station to the NW and until the collapse of the industry in 1912 it was the headquarters for all visiting buyers many of whom travelled from as far abroad as Germany.

Famous Mines include: *Alladin*, *Breakfast Creek*, *Cunnavalla*, *Exhibition*, *Little Wonder*, *Friday Creek*, *Gem*, *Hammond's*, *Seven Wonders*, *Scotchman*, *Stoney Creek*, *Top of the World*, *Quartpot*..

Yowah – Home of the Yowah Nut

Yowah Township is situated 165 km West of Cunamulla and has a friendly population of around 100 people.

There is a fossicking area for visitors, Caravan Park, golf course and numerous retail outlets and Opal cutters willing to help educate newcomers!

The greater Yowah Area also known as Cunamulla Mining Field, encompassing Koroit Opal Field, produces a whole sub-species of Boulder Opal, known generically as Yowah Nuts. The best examples reveal highly-prized solid cores of gem crystal. These small ironstone boulders or 'nuts' are found thickly embedded in the

pipeclay band which varies in thickness from 15 centimeters to 60 cms.

This marvelous form of Boulder Opal includes a number of different nodule shapes and sizes which contain kernels of concentrically patterned and opalized matrix.

The first lease was registered at *the Yowah* in 1884. Mines include: *The Great Extended*, *Southern Cross*, *Black Gate* followed with the discovery of Opal on Dynevor Downs in 1894. Nearby mines include *Leopardwood*.

Koroit - Situated (80 km NW of Cunamulla) 50 miles north-east of Yowah, as the crow flies! Opal was discovered here in 1897 by Lawrence Rostron, the manager of Tilboroo station, Eulo. The field encompasses the *Red Star*, *Fiery Comet*, *Boobara* and *Holloways* mines and produces brilliant Nut Opal, incredibly beautiful Matrix picture stones and red jasper-like Boulder Band capable of revealing brilliant faces of colour from thin horizontal veins of Opal.



Yowah Nut Conglomerate

Sources & Image Credits:

BEAUTIFUL OPALS - AUSTRALIAS NATIONAL GEM - SPECIAL 2000 COMMEMORATIVE EDITION, Len Cram, 1999.

Opaline, Collection (Red Boulder Splits, Yowah conglomerate) THE LAST VOYAGE TO INDIA & AUSTRALIA, in the 'Sunbeam' 1886 - 1887, Longmans Green & Co. London, Anna Brassey, 1st Ed. 1889.

WINTON by Bruce Hutchinson - Photographer, 2006.

Opal Cutter Winton - November 1901, Photo courtesy of: Queensland Department of Mines & Energy.

From <http://www.opalsinformation.com/index.php/Mining-Towns/queensland-opal-towns-a-fields/All-Pages.html>

Knapping Juniper Ridge Opal

Thread found on McRocks from 11/15/09 to 11/25/09

Rob Townsend

Decided to do a little knapping today. A friend in San Angelo Texas gave me a box full of deer antler while I was there a few days ago so I made a few knapping tools from some of them.

I sat in a field next to the hotel here in Midland Texas and commenced to trying out my new tools on some Facet grade fire opal from the Juniper Ridge Opal Mine.

While I was engrossed in studying the piece in hand something caught my attention from the corner of my eye. A road runner was crouched in the dry grass a several yards away. I watched him for a minute or two and went back to work. Every once in a while he would move and get my attention again, "was he getting closer to me?" I stopped working and just watched the little guy as he literally stalked me. I guess he was curious, he got within 20 feet of me and stopped. I started working again thinking the movement and the noise would scare him off but to my surprise he started getting



Tools for Knapping

closer again. I stopped again and this time I flashed him with light reflected off the piece of opal in my hand and this really got his attention. By being very still and flashing the stone at him I was able to coax him to about 4-5 feet away. He didn't seem scared of me at all in fact he started feeding on small bugs around him. I went back to work and the next time I looked up he was gone. Was a neat experience. Without further ado here are some pics of

the two points I made today. I left these points a little crude as I don't have my regular tools with me and also to keep from losing the dendrite inclusion in the larger one.

Sorry about the size of the pics. I guess they've changed how I post them again. I'll have to play and learn the new way. I hate messing with pics it gives me a headache!



Knapped Juniper Ridge Opal #1

Krystal Lynn Hund
WOW!

That's neat! While I was reading your text I thought 'what a waste of fire opal' but then I saw the pics. Beautiful! Knapping is something I want to learn someday.

Rob Townsend

Although the flakes of fire opal "could" have been carved or even cut into several "small" faceted stones I think this was the best use of them. They were fairly thin and I have a 5 gallon bucket of them for carving, cabbing, and faceting. It may be some time before I get around to cutting the rest of the material as I'm moving to Colorado this summer. I'll try to get a couple cut before then and I'm working on the FTR for my trip to the mine so stay tuned to McRocks for that.

Kors
Rob

Cheryl White Hawk

Rob you have done an awesome job once again! Gorgeous points! Like the antler tools too giggle
Any chance of a group trip to the mine?

Phil

A 5 gallon bucket of flakes? Bowl me over Momma, I'm jealous! How do I get some? Are they for sale somewhere or something? I knap a little and would like to try some!

Richard

Hey Phil, just Google Juniper Ridge opal and you should find their website. It's in Oregon between Klamath Falls and Lakeview. I mine obsidian just southeast of there but have never booked an opal dig. You can also get samples from them or buy quantity. It's beautiful and quality material.

Rob Townsend

Phil, The 5 gal bucket is not filled with "flakes". I have opals up to 5 pounds each in that bucket. I just saved a few flakes found in and around the pit specifically for knapping so I wouldn't have to "hit" one of my big facet grade opals with a billet and take a chance of it exploding in my hand and making me cry. I'm sure it wouldn't do that but you know how phobias are. If you'd like some fire opal material to knap click on my name and send me an e-mail, I'll send you contact information for the mine owners. I'm sure Ken and Chuck would be happy to accommodate you.

Kors, Rob



Knapped Juniper Ridge Opal #2

From <http://mcrocks.websitetoolbox.com>

The website for the Juniper Ridge is opal mine is:

<http://www.juniperridgeopal.com>. **The Editor.**

++++
Found this on the Internet – after reading it, I decided I would go on a trip with the Bates Brothers anytime! I would go just for the laughter! The Editor

Bates Brothers Oregon Trip - June-July 2006

By Lee Bates

I left early in the 24th of June to head to Oregon for a yearly trip with my 2 brothers Jay and Scott. On Satus Pass, Washington, I hit a deer with my car and killed it. I hate to see animals suffer. My deer

whistles on my 1967 Cougar car have worked many times but this deer jumped from behind a hill and did not hear them. I did not swerve since I did not want to roll the car. Ten hours later I met my brothers at Mann Lake, Oregon for fishing. The fishing was poor so we sat around in the 100 degree heat telling stories. We went to soak in the hot springs on the Alford Desert to soak in the 100 degree heat. This is the only time of the year that I am not cold. We met Carl Thomas there our old prospector friend who lives on the Alford Desert. He needs a knee replaced and looks like he is dying. He is 88. I will never forget his late wife chewing him out for giving me her best rocks. I am good at getting free rocks. You ought to see me get free hats at air shows. My wife says where are going to put all these free hats? We had a milk shake in Fields, Oregon, but since the restaurant changed hands the shake was more expensive and not as good.

The next day we headed for the Virgin Valley in Nevada to camp at the Hot Springs and mine Precious Opal. My brother Scott was worried about seeing his son in Whitefish, Montana so he drove back the next morning. That night it rained so we went to bed early. A wild burro brayed in the desert keeping me awake. I think he was calling his harem. I sleep in my 1967 Cougar on a board and a foam mattress. I have for 20 years. Ever wonder why I walk slumped over? I take the passenger seat back out to make room. Beat's putting up a tent. I amaze \$150,000 motor home owners who look out their picture window in a campground at me sleeping in my 39 year old Cougar camper. We went to the Honeymoon Opal Mine the next day but had no luck. People back at camp told us how they were getting good Precious Opal at the Rainbow Ridge Opal Mine but it was closed that day. Precious Opal is formed when the silica replaced the wood and opalizes instead of petrifying. This forms an irregular pattern which reflects light in every direction and angle creating every color of the rainbow. It is beautiful to behold. The next day we went to the Rainbow Ridge Opal Mine and started finding Precious Opal right away like everybody else. I was digging away when I hit a dirt clod that suddenly gave off a reflection from the sun. I cleaned the dirt clod and "Stuff dreams are made of appeared" (borrowed from the Humphrey Bogart movie Treasures of the Sierra Madre also famous for the line "We don't need no stinking badges"). A precious Opal about 80 carats reflected every color of the rainbow. Was I dreaming? I finally hit pay dirt after all these trips to the Opal mines. I showed everyone around my find. We kept digging and found about 20 more Precious Opals. That night a yuppie from Sacramento pulled in at 10 PM into the campground with his huge trailer and new pickup with an ATV. Since I could not go to sleep with his noise, I joined him at his fire. We burned beautiful cabinet boards from his father's construction sites. He told how daddy paid for his power boat racing. Why was not I born with a rich father?

The next day we drove to Lakeview, Oregon for supplies but forgot to dump off the garbage. Then on to the top of Hart Mountain, Oregon, an Antelope Reserve to soak in another hot springs and camp. I told a woman camped near the hot springs that I was going in nude. She said that was OK since she had been married several times before. We saw two Pine Martins which were extremely rare. Then all hell broke loose. The hail storm hit us just as we were dividing up our Precious Opals. The hail bounced off the hood of my car and I was afraid it would dent the good steel. The thunder was weird. It went boom, crackle and boom. Three tornados tore through the Sunstone Mines on the valley floor below.

The next day we met Jay's rock dub, the San Francisco Gem and Mineral Society, at the Sunstone area near Plush, Oregon. The sunstone we were looking for is a precious gemstone which is cuttable into jewelry. The next day at the Dust Devil Mine people found good Sunstones right away but I had no luck. A guy found a 155 carat Sunstone from our group worth about \$1,000 dollars. The next day we went to the Spectrum, Mine where Jay and I found many good big Sunstones with red and schiller. We dug for 8 hours. We used water to wash our tailings which from now on I will never be without. At the potluck that night we invited the mine owner who

showed us a huge 300 carat Sunstone. The potluck was excellent with grilled chicken, crème puffs and pizza. I had olives stuffed with garlic for the first time in my life. At the Spectrum Mine, I bought tailings from the Himalayan Tourmaline Mine near San Diego, California which had 40 good cuttable red and green tourmalines in it. Also at the Spectrum Mine, I bought Diane a Namibia Blue Agate pennant which was wire wrapped for \$50 which was a good buy (worth \$150). My wife loves me again. The next day we headed for Hampton Butte, Oregon to dig for beautiful red and green petrified wood. I arrived at Riley, Oregon after crossing the desert with only 1 ½ gallons of gas left. I could just see someone coming across my bleached bones in a rusting Cougar in the middle of the desert. Jay and I ate in a restaurant in Burns, Oregon. I think I scared the waitress with my 10 day old beard (prevents sun burn). At Hampton Butte I hiked out 1 mile looking for loose roundels on the surface but found nothing. What beautiful Juniper Pine country. The next day we hit it big with beautiful green and red petrified wood becoming a king. It was perfect 80 degree weather while Ellensburg had 100 degree weather. I told people I had to go to the desert to escape the heat. Also there were no bugs since there was no water. I used up Jay's hot shower water cleaning my rocks. That night we sat around talking about UFOs so I naturally told my Sasquatch story. The next day we drove to the Paulina Limb Cast Area in Oregon famous as the area which Jay stepped on my hand to out reach me for a big Limb Cast. A Limb Cast is a clear glass like piece in which the silica replaces the wood in a clear duplicate of part of the tree. Jay as usual found more pieces than I did (but I found the big Precious Opal). Then all hell broke loose again. It thundered and rained so hard I and everybody else got the hell out of there before we became trapped in the gulch. I drove to Satus Pass against a 60 mph headwind. When the trucks went by they almost blew me off the road. I stopped in a campground at Satus Pass to spend the night. I showed the campground host my big Opal. She did not realize that I was the same guy after I shaved.

The next day after 14 days I arrived back at Ellensburg, Washington. After my shower, I had to call a plumber to clean the rocks and dirt out of my drain. The trip cost \$400 and was typical of the trips I have taken with my 2 brothers for the last 34 years. Our dad used to go with us and my nieces and nephews but my dad is dead and my nieces and nephews are grown up. Since all 3 of the Bates brothers have had prostate cancer, I hope we can continue to do these trips. I like the trips since Jay is a good cook of steak and beans every night. I wash the paper plates every night. We vary the menu with steak and pork and beans one night and steak and chili the next night. "Cookie we have to stop feeding these boys beans" (borrowed from the Mel Brooks movie Blazing Saddles).
PS What is the big 85 carat Precious Opal worth? Tune in next summer for the conclusion.

Lee Bates 7-10-06

From <http://mcrocks.com>

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June 2010 Gem & Mineral Shows

More shows can be found at

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

4-5--PRICE, UT: 4th annual show, "Castle Country Rock, Fossil & Mineral Show"; Braun Lapidary, CEU Silversmith [Lapidary & Wire Wrapping Classes]; Jennifer Leavitt Student Center, College of Eastern UT, 536 North 300 East; Fri. 10-7, Sat. 10-7; free admission; rocks, fossils, minerals, jewelry, metal detectors, equipment, beads, displays, door prizes; contact Patrick Braun, P.O. Box 236, Ferron, UT 84523, (435) 384-2211; e-mail: pbraun@cskyw.net

4-6--LAS VEGAS, NV: Business-to-business gem trade show; Gem & Lapidary Wholesalers Inc.; Bally's Las Vegas Hotel & Casino, Pacific Ballroom, 3645 Las Vegas Blvd. S; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-3; contact G&LW, P.O. Box 98, Flora, MS 39071-0098, (601) 879-8832; e-mail: info@glwshows.com; Web site: glwshows.com

4-6--PUYALLUP, WA: Show; Puyallup Valley Gem & Mineral Club; Fruitland Grange, 112th St. and 86th Ave. E; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 11-4; contact Mark Baumann, (253) 756-8636; e-mail: djmneb@earthlink.net

4-6--SAN MATEO, CA: Show; International Gem & Jewelry Show Inc.; San Mateo County Event Center, 2495 S. DE; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 11-5; adults \$8; open to the public, professional jewelers, artists; International Gem & Jewelry Show Inc., 120 Derwood Circle, Rockville, MD 20850, (301) 294-1640; e-mail: info@intergem.net; Web site: www.InterGem.com

4-6--TULSA, OK: Show, "Gem Faire"; Gem Faire Inc.; Expo Square/Central Park Hall, 4145 E. 21st St.; 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

5--MURFREESBORO, AR: Show, "Crater Gem & Mineral Show"; Crater of Diamonds State Park; 209 State Park Rd.; Sat. 8-4; free admission; gems, minerals, jewelry, diamond search area adults \$7, children \$4; contact Margi Jenks, 209 State Park Rd., Murfreesboro, AR 71958, (870) 285-3116; e-mail: margaret.jenks@AR.gov; Web site: www.craterofdiamondsstatepark.com

5-6--COEUR d'ALENE, ID: Show; North ID Mineral Club; Kootenai Co. Fairgrounds and Event Center, Kathleen and Government Way; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-4; contact Warren Price, P.O. Box 1643, Hayden, ID 83835; e-mail: genuinegems@gmail.com

5-6--GLEN DORA, CA: Show; Glendora GEMS; Goddard Middle School; 859 E. Sierra Madre; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; free admission; dealers, demonstrations, displays, door prizes; contact Bonnie Bidwell, 1010 E. Mountain View, Glendora, CA 91741, (626) 963-4638; e-mail: ybidwell2@aol.com

12-13--SAN FRANCISCO, CA: Show, "San Francisco Crystal Fair"; Pacific Crystal Guild; 99 Marina Blvd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; admission \$6; contact Jerry Tomlinson, (415) 383-7837; email: sfxl@earthlink.net; Web site: www.crystalfair.com

18-20--NEWPORT, OR: 47th annual show, "Rock'n the Coast"; OR Coast Agate Club; Yaquina View Elementary School, Multipurpose Room, 351 S.E. Harney St.; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4:30; dealers, demonstrations, displays, agate, jasper, gems, fossils; contact K. Myers, (541) 265-2514

18-20--SANDY (SALT LAKE CITY), UT: Show, "Gem Faire"; Gem Faire Inc.; South Towne Exposition Center/Exhibit Hall 5, 9575 S. State St.; 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

18-20--SANTA MONICA, CA: Show; International Gem & Jewelry Show Inc.; Santa Monica Civic Auditorium, 1855 Main St.; 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

18-20--WHITTIER, CA: AFMS/CFMS show, "Hidden Treasures"; North Orange County Gem & Mineral Society, American Federation of Mineralogical Societies, CA Federation of Mineralogical Societies; So. CA University of Health Sciences, 16200 E. Amber Valley Rd. (www.scuhs.edu); Fri. 10-5, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$6, children under 14 free; speakers, field trips, display cases, raffle, kids' room, demonstrations, vendors, supplies, jewelry, beads, fossils, gems; contact Don Warthen, (626) 330-8974; e-mail: odwarthen@verizon.net; Web site: www.nocgms.com

19-20--BUTTE, MT: Annual show; Butte Mineral & Gem Club; Civic Center Annex, 1340 Harrison Ave. (exit 127 North); Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; 15 dealers, minerals, gems, jewelry, fossils, displays, demonstrators; contact Pete Knudsen, P.O. Box 4492, Butte, MT 59702, (406) 496-4395

19-20--CAYUCOS, CA: 46th annual show; Cayucos Gem & Mineral Show; San Luis Obispo Gem & Mineral Club; Cayucos Vets Hall, 10 Cayucos Dr.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-5; free admission; rocks, slabs, minerals, fossils, gems, carvings, lapidary equipment, drawing; contact Mike Lyons, (805) 610-0757; e-mail: jadestar@charter.net

24-27--PRINEVILLE, OR: Show, "Prineville Rockhound Show and Pow Wow"; Prineville Rockhound Pow Wow Association; Crook County Fair Grounds, 1280 S. Main; Thu. 9-5, Fri. 9-5, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; free admission; auction, field trips; contact Rich Knight, 1709 SW Hunter Rd., Prineville, OR 97754, (541) 447-5298; e-mail: richknight@yahoo.com

25-27--SEATTLE, WA: Show; International Gem & Jewelry Show Inc.; Seattle Center, Exhibition Hall & Northwest Rooms, 305 Mercer St.; 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

25-27--SAN DIEGO, CA: Show, "Gem Faire"; Gem Faire Inc.; Scottish Rite Event Center, 1895 Camino del Rio S; 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

30-4--MADRAS, OR: 61st show; All Rockhounds Pow Wow Club of America; Jefferson County Fairgrounds; free admission; swap tables, door prizes, rock toss, auction, members-only field trips daily, more than 70 vendors, jewelry, faceted gemstones, minerals, fossils, crystals, findings, equipment; contact Pauline Miller, (360) 658-8091; e-mail: paulinem280@aol.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:
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 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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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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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 #6
June 2010**

Some Topics In This Issue:

- I Am a Rockhound
- AOS Live Auction
- 175-pound Opal Found in Idaho
- Knapping Juniper Ridge Opal
- Bates Brothers Oregon Trip

TO:

Important Dates:

June 7 - Board Meeting

June 10- General Meeting
Live Opal Auction

Bring you opals, gems, jewelry, rough, etc. to auction and bring some money to buy! Great deals are to be had and money to be made.

June 10

Live Opal Auction

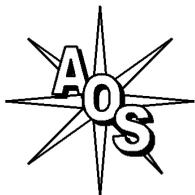
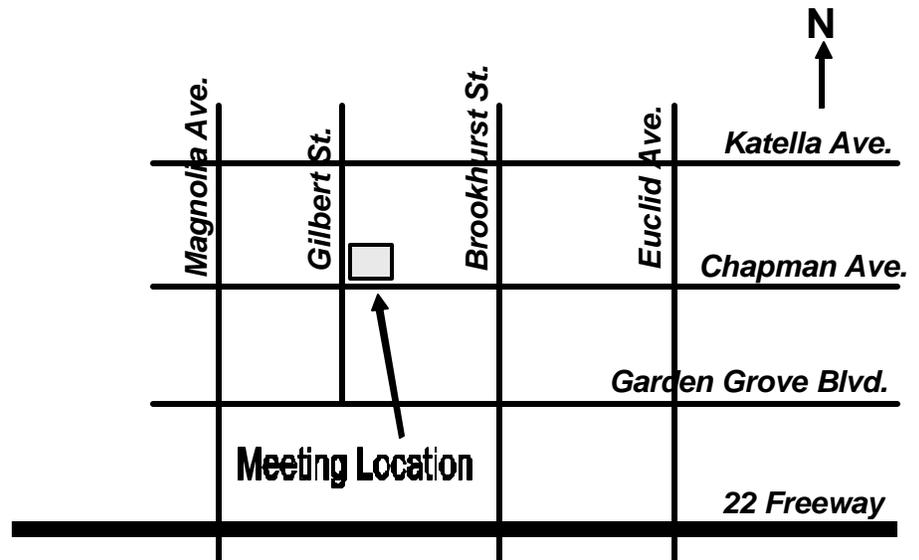
— GENERAL MEETINGS —

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



The American Opal Society

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