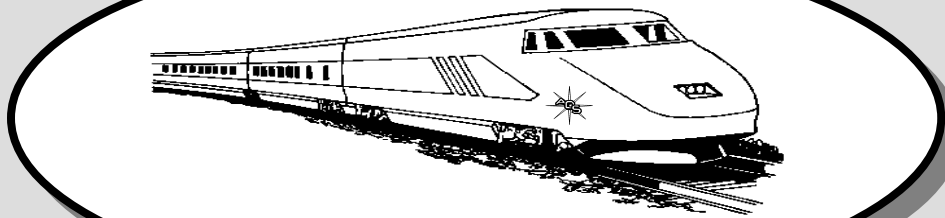


# The Opal Express



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## President's Message

*By Pete Goetz*

Hey there, all you Opalholics, hope all is well with you and yours. I hope some of you were able to make it out to Quartzite this month. There is always a lot of interesting things see and buy. Some of our members were among the vendors.

Well, it's February, and show issues are moving along OK. No major problems at the moment. Still could use a few volunteers for various committees: Set-up and Tear down, Food, If interested in working reception desk check with Veronica (she doesn't bite').

As I mentioned in the last OPAL Express, we could also use some help with finding speakers for our monthly General Meeting. Topics that relate to OPAL are best, but anything related to the Lapidary Arts is certainly in order. Last month we had a presentation on a new opal cutting machine. The machine was in a 'prototype' stage. All that attended had a chance to have a little input on possible changes to the machine.

That's about it for now; you all have a great Valentines Days.

## Members Only Website Password

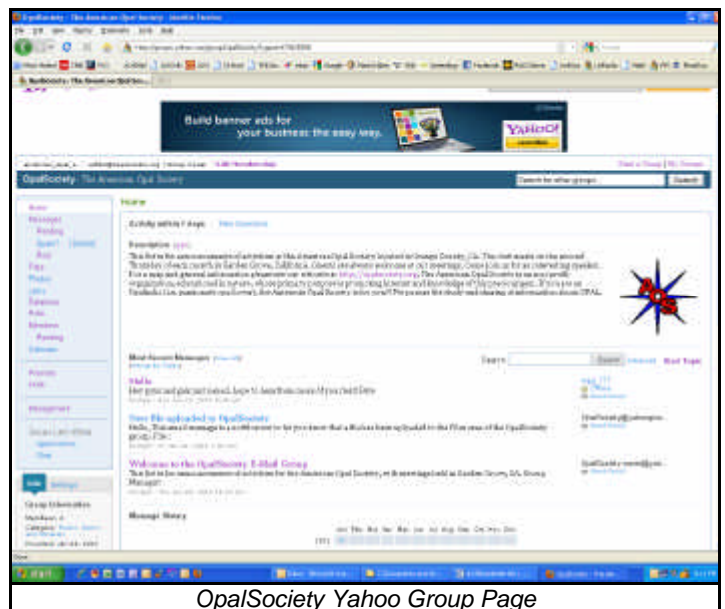
To log onto the website's members only area at: [http://opalsociety.org/aos\\_members\\_only\\_area.htm](http://opalsociety.org/aos_members_only_area.htm) type: Name: "member" and Password: "weloopal".

## New OpalSociety Group on the Internet

The Society has created a new on-line e-Group for American Opal Society members for club activities and as

communication forum for all things opal. It is located at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/OpalSociety/>

All members will be invited to join by the moderator, Jim Pisani, or you can join on your own by [clicking here to join](#). You can also click on the button "Join This Group" on the



OpalSociety Yahoo Group Page

web page to join.

## Will Shaw presents his new *The GemSmith* Mini-Cutter Prototype at the January Meeting

Will Shaw, of presented a potential new line for The Gemsmith to members at the last general meeting in January. Will had two "Mini Cutters" that he presented at the meeting and demonstrated how to use them. Then he let members practice cutting and polishing cabochons on his machines. Will asked for our critiques about how to make it better, being a prototype. Members gave a few pointers, but most were impressed by the compact size of the unit and it's versatility. Good luck with your endeavor, Will!

## Lloviznando Opal: A Look Above the Surface



*Rough and cut lloviznando opal. Cut: 22.47 carats, 18.97 x 18.3 x 11.97 mm. Rough: 31.66 carats, 35 x 30 x 7 mm. From the Gladnick Collection. These pieces have been sold.*

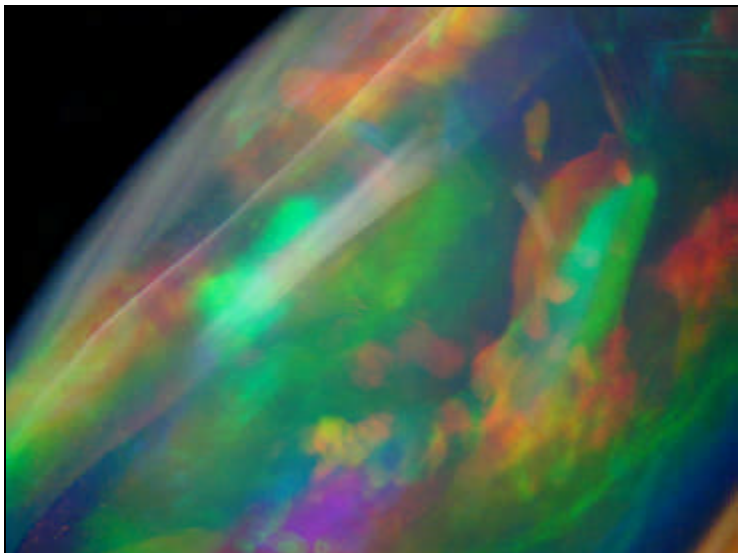
*(Photo: Wimon Manorotkul)*

This gemstone was our featured stone for June 2008. We're pleased to present here an extended look at this rare material from central Mexico.

For in them you shall see the living fire of the ruby, the glorious purple of the amethyst, the sea-green of the emerald, all glittering together in an incredible mixture of light.

### Roman Pliny the Elder on Opal, 1st Century AD

In general when we hear "opal" we think Australia, but there are a few areas in Mexico that produce some of the finest opal with play-



*Light rise over Planet Opal. A close-up view of the source of the color in this featured stone. From the Gladnick Collection.*

*(Photos: Jason Stephenson)*



José Ramírez, J. F. de Ceballos Romay y José Pueblo



José Pueblo (Pueblito) narra la historia del ópalo "Colibri"

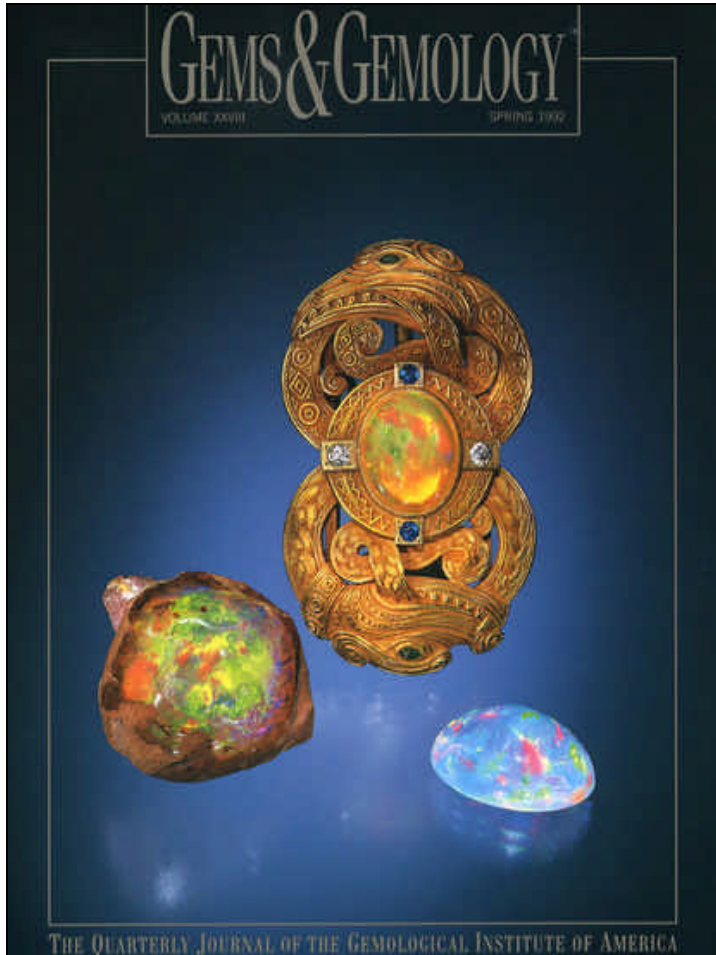
## La Muerte de una Mina

*The Death of a Mine. From the Mexican daily Excélsior, August 19, 1984, showing a local mining family and the tannish rhyolite that held the "Colibri" (hummingbird) nodule.*

of-color on the planet. Although Mexican fire opals with orange-to-red body color are relatively common, other varieties from Mexico exhibit a dazzling play-of-color phenomenon. Some maintain the orange-to-red body color while a few take on a white or ice-blue base, which is often referred to as "water opal." The singular body colors can be beautiful, but the exceptional ones also include another dimension of color. When all the components align, a full

spectrum of color dances from within the heart of the gem and jumps out of the stone three-dimensionally, almost floating above the surface. The local Mexican miners called the light-and-color dance “floating light” or lloviznando.

Our featured gemstone for June 2008 is by some standards one of the best from the Magdalena mining district in Jalisco, Mexico. A true spectacle of lloviznando: you can actually spin it around in your hands and interact with the play-of-color. A magical blend of optics and color in a tangible jewel. This 22.47-carat opal exhibits a icy-blue body with a play-of-color that meanders through all the shades of the rainbow. Each color a pure neon hue playing in formations like brush strokes and flowing bands.



*Gems & Gemology (Spring 1992) cover featuring the “Hummingbird” (left) and a blue opal from Bill Larson’s collection. The blue, or “water” opal on the cover is very similar to this month’s feature—just a little smaller, at 16.27 carats.*

**The Geography of Mexican Opal**

The two main mining areas in Mexico that produce these precious opals are Querétaro and Magdalena, situated in central Mexico, northwest of Mexico City and Guadalajara respectively. These historical deposits have been coveted by the native families for over a hundred years. They consistently produce oranges, reds, and blues with little or no play-of-color, while sporadically producing the wild, full-spectrum patterns of color seen in the rare opals. In August of 1984 a local newspaper in the Querétaro mining district declared La Muerte de una Mina: the death of the Iris Mine.

After many changes of ownership and a lack of funds, the final detonations at the Iris Mine were sparked and all but the rubble remains. They did, however, find the end-all-be-all jewel in the final blast, and the death of the mine ensued. They named the spectacular nodule “Colibrí,” or hummingbird. The Iris Mine might be dead, but the Querétaro and Magdalena mining districts roll on into



*“Colibrí,” the hummingbird. An 80.12-carat rough nodule from the death of the Iris Mine. Bill Larson Collection. (Photo: Nikolai Kouznetsov)*

the future. However, the miners say they are lucky to find a few truly spectacular opals over a year of mining.

**The Geology of Lloviznando**

The opals crystallize in a hydrothermal system where the hydrous silica gels get trapped and concentrated in cavities and fractures within rhyolitic lava flows. This unique geologic process then “freezes” the opal melt from the high temperature solutions that begin at around 160°C. The opals often have one- and two-phase inclusions with trapped remnants of aqueous liquids, water vapor, carbon dioxide, and sodium chloride from the original solution. The Querétaro district is one of the only significant sources of gem-quality “fire” opal to originate from an igneous or rhyolitic source. The Magdalena district has a similar geology, producing exceptional fire opals and, in rare cases, “water” and lloviznando opals as well. Australian opals, on the other hand, form at low temperatures from circulating groundwater in sedimentary-type environments.

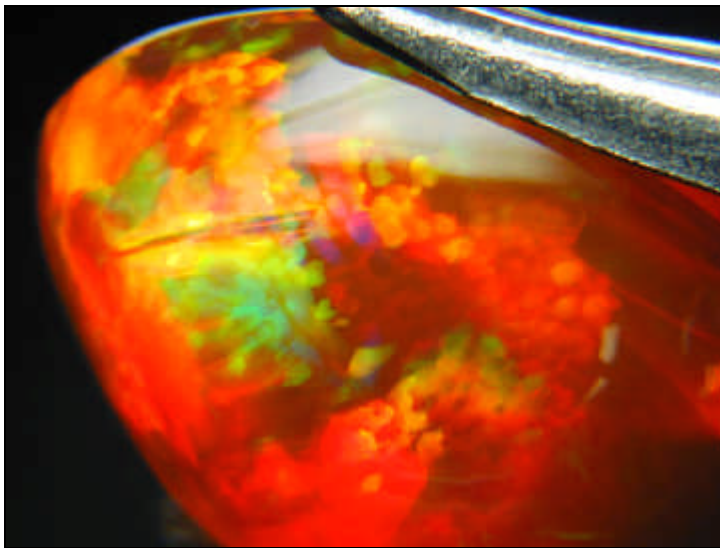
**The Term Lloviznando**

Lloviznando is the gerund of the Spanish verb lloviznar, “to drizzle.” It is often spelled llovisnando by local Mexican miners and dealers, as well as other Spanish speakers. Other variant spellings appear in the literature, including the past participle, lloviznado.<sup>1</sup> Frank Leechman, in *The Opal Book*, first published in 1961, used the related variant, lluviznados,

pronounced “you-vees-nah-doz”, and meaning fire-rain. In the high plateau of Mexico there are frequently very heavy showers during the rainy season. When the sun shines through such a slanting shower each rain droplet reflects its individual minute rainbow as a shaft of moving colour. The lluviznados have this character; shafts of colour, sometimes minute, sometimes bold, penetrate an almost transparent body of bluish or faint topaz opalescence with each movement of the stone. Its scattered specks of different colours gleam in a polished cabochon like swarms of tiny stars.<sup>2</sup>

The great John Sinkankas used the variant lluviznando<sup>3</sup> in his book *Gemstones of North America* (Volume 1, 1959), describing this Mexican opal par excellence as “to sprinkle with rain,” and stating that connoisseurs of opal agree that Mexican varieties possess a certain limpidity and play of color unique and distinguishable from any opal on the planet. Once you are familiar with the dazzling hues, fluidity, and structure of the phenomenal opals from Mexico you can identify the characteristic anywhere they happen to be displayed.

The fire and water opals of central Mexico have been seen and described dating back to the Aztecs, who called the play of color phenomenon vitzitziltecpatl or “hummingbird stone,” alluding to the



Firestone. This is an exceptional example of the red body color with play-of-color. From the Magdalena mining district. (Photo: Jason Stephenson)

flashes of color seen as the colorful little hummingbirds hover or float in the air.

Today, explanations and interpretations of the meaning of lloviznando by local miners and dealers vary, from a literal drizzling phenomenon, to the poetic "floating light." As a local lover of lloviznando told us:

little raindrops barely there but still like in London when it seems to rain but it's not really raining strongly; it's just like [the] feather touch of rain... shining like raindrops; it's amazing: the color, the shine, and the sparkles of stars in the stone.

And, again, Sinkankas (1959):

The body color is an extremely pale honey yellow, sometimes faintly blue, and exceptionally transparent; in the depths of each gem may be narrow sheets of intense color descending like a shower of rain drops through the rays of the setting sun. Sometimes the individual darts of flame are small, or other times very coarse, but in any case, once seen, a good lloviznando is not easily forgotten. There are a few opal gems anywhere which can compare in beauty with the finest of the Mexican kinds.

#### The Future of Fire and Water

Pala has started a relationship with one of the the mining families from the Magdalena district to start selling opals, from small finer pieces to exceptional lloviznando varieties. So hopefully we will be able to offer a nice selection of fire and water opals with play-of-color. Lines of communication have also been started in regards to Pala actually offering our expertise in mining. The deposit has historically been an open pit, but there may be ways to go underground to chase the rich ore veins. The partnership could be a very interesting way to bring more spectacular fire opal to the American market and beyond.

Colorado gem dealer Steve Green, who first raised with us the issue of variant spellings, consulted a colleague in the central highlands of Mexico who uses the term lloviznado ("drizzled") to apply to such opal, "porque lloviznando es en el momento que está sucediendo" ("because drizzling is in the moment that it's happening

Leechman includes this description in a section of the chapter "The Foreign Opal Fields" (p. 22) in which he quotes personal communication in 1957 from Ron Stokes of Vancouver. It's possible this description was obtained from Stokes.]

Leechman's and Sinkankas's rendering of the word as lloviznados and lloviznando, respectively, may be due to the near-homonymic Spanish words lluvia ("rain") and lluvioso/-osa ("rainy"). Others have used the lluvi- variant. Allan W. Eckert, in *The World of Opals* (1997, p. 170), writes about girasol opals: "in Mexico they are called lloviznados"—the capital I being a typographical error that is

repeated twice more (pp. 174, 227), but is rendered lloviznados twice in the index (p. 446). In *Gems* (6th ed., 2006), Michael O'Donoghue includes the term lloviznando in the glossary (p. 831). From [http://www.palagems.com/opal\\_lloviznando.htm](http://www.palagems.com/opal_lloviznando.htm) Reprinted for educational purposes under the "fair use" provision of the U.S. Copyright Act.

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### Huge Gold Nugget Found in Sierra up for Auction

By Martin Griffith, *The Associated Press*, 01/09/2011



This undated photo provided by Holabird-Kagin Americana, shows a 100-ounce gold nugget found by a man last year on his property near Nevada City, Calif. The nugget is expected to fetch from \$225,000 to \$400,000 when it goes up for auction in March in Sacramento, Calif. (AP Photo/Holabird-Kagin Americana)

Some 150 years after the forty-niners rushed west in search of riches, a new gold discovery in the Sierra Nevada is stirring excitement.

A 100-ounce nugget, found by a man last year on his property near Nevada City, Calif., is expected to fetch between \$225,000 and \$400,000 when it goes up for auction March 15 in Sacramento, Calif.

Fred Holabird, a mining geologist whose Reno-based company is one of the country's largest sellers of Western Americana and is handling its sale, thinks it's the largest California gold nugget left in existence.

Virtually all of California's gold fields have been thoroughly combed by miners, he said, and other monster nuggets from the Golden State have been melted into ingots for money.

While bigger nuggets have surfaced in Australia in recent decades, no similar-sized placer nuggets from California have turned up in museums, he added.

The Smithsonian Institution's largest placer nugget from California weighs about 80 ounces.

"The chances of finding something like this anymore are beyond remote. It could be one in a trillion," Holabird said.

The man was using a metal detector in an unmined ancient stream bed near the old Mother Lode mining camp of Washington when he stumbled on the nugget in February 2010.

The Union of Grass Valley, Calif., has identified him as San Francisco businessman Jim Sanders.

The so-called Washington Nugget is thick and oblong, and resembles

a "squished loaf of bread," Holabird said, adding it was found in the same area where hydraulic mining was invented in the 19th century. A lack of records makes it difficult to determine how the nugget compares in size historically, said John Clinkenbeard, senior geologist with the California Geological Survey in Sacramento.

But he said he's unaware of any similar 100-ounce placer nugget being found in California in recent decades.

"I can't put a numerical value on how rare it is to find a nugget like this," Clinkenbeard said. "All I know is that large nuggets are very rare and your odds of finding one aren't very good."

The largest known nugget found in California weighed 54 pounds and was found in 1859 in Butte County, he added.

The California State Mining and Mineral Museum in Mariposa, Calif., displays the Fricot "Nugget," a rare 13.8-pound specimen of crystallized gold discovered in the American River in 1864.

But Clinkenbeard and Holabird said there's a difference between Mariposa's crystalline gold specimen and the placer nugget found last year.

True nuggets such as the latter are a product of erosion in a modern or ancient streambed, while the former consists of native gold in quartz that has not gone through the same erosional process.

While current gold prices would make the Washington Nugget worth roughly \$130,000, Holabird expects a collector to pay well more because of its historical value. Gold closed at \$1,368.90 an ounce Friday.

"It's worth more as a collectible," he said. "No one will be melting this thing. It's one of the most important California gold artifacts that exist."

From [http://www.dailynews.com/news/ci\\_17053064?source=rss](http://www.dailynews.com/news/ci_17053064?source=rss)



Fancy Trillium-cut Benitoite

### Benitoite

Benitoite (beh-NEE-toe-ite) is a rare gem that was first discovered in 1906 along the headwaters of the San Benito River in San Benito County, California. This small region is the only source in the world for gem quality Benitoite. Because of its rarity and beauty, Benitoite was adopted as California's state gemstone in 1985.

Benitoites have often been mistaken for fine blue sapphires and spinels due to their rich blue-violet colors. Benitoites tend to be found in smaller sizes with gems larger than one carat being the exception. Larger gems with rich color and exceptional quality are greatly prized by collectors. The one pictured here is described as a "Fancy Trillium" cut with rich blue-violet hue and dark tone of moderate saturation. It weighs 1.83 carats and is 6.9 millimeters in diameter. Scott Forrest of WSF Gems, who gave us the photo and permission to use it in this article, describes it as "very well cut with The Opal Express The American Opal Society

nice dispersion and high lustre".

W. Scott Forrest is a second-generation in the mining and gemstone business. His father and his father's partner owned the "Benitoite Gem Mine". After faceting Benitoite and other precious stones for them Scott began to sell his own and opened WSF Gems in Old Town Clovis. He still facets most of them to maximize beauty and value. He invites jewelry and lapidary hobbyists to visit his store or to shop his web site. You can see this gem and others at <http://www.wsfgems.com>.

Article from Mark Nelson, Editor - Rockhound Ramblings, Pasadena Lapidary Society Feb 2011

### A Shore Thing

By Stephen Fried



Sea Glass

#### People are getting very serious about sea glass.

While there is less of it on beaches than ever before—because of recycling, sand replenishment, and rising water levels—interest in collecting "mermaid's tears" has only grown in intensity. To get to the best sites, extreme glassers will "hike for two hours, windsurf, jet-ski long distances, even rappel down cliffs, whatever it takes," says "Godfather of Sea Glass" Richard LaMotte, whose self-published Pure Sea Glass has sold 85,000 copies. Individual pieces sell for up to \$300, jewelry can run into the thousands, and sea glass's comforting hues are increasingly popular for home decorating.

There's even a North American Sea Glass Association (NASGA) whose two-day fall confab draws more than 5000, highlighted by the Shard of the Year contest with its \$1000 prize. (There are complex rules about colors and how weathered, or "cooked," the pieces have to be; and extra points for lettering or unusual shapes that can denote age going back decades or even centuries.)

In my family, it's not uncommon to find a gaggle of us glassheads combing Jersey Shore beaches, heads down. Every few minutes



Stephen Fried

someone will yell “Green!” or “Brown!” or “Clear!”—or if they’re lucky, “Blue!” Our holy grails, though, are reds. My dad, our shard patriarch, searched his whole life without finding one. We take our glass pretty personally. Most people do. Some shards seem to have mystical powers, as if placed in your path by long-lost relatives or friends.



More Sea Glass

If the glassing is bad or the tide is high (low tide reveals more glass), we dream of the so-called Glass Beaches at Fort Bragg in Northern California and in Kauai, Hawaii, as well as locations along ocean and lake shores where bottles and tableware were once dumped. (It takes 30 years of wave action and high water pH to pit surfaces and smooth edges.)

This year, I decided to ask LaMotte (pictured left) — whose day job is marketing water-testing equipment — if he would take me to one of his secret spots. On a hot summer afternoon, the 50-year-old shardist and I meet at an undisclosed Chesapeake Bay location and kayak out to the beaches where he and his wife, Nancy, were first turned on to sea glass.

We come ashore to what my family would call a “target-rich environment.” Most of the times I bend over, I pick up two or three pieces—each one fully cooked. LaMotte seems disappointed by the take (and the beach erosion). But with 30,000 pieces at home, he is a generous glassing companion, and unconcerned when I pounce on a perfect purple bottle bottom. He appreciates shards large and small for their colors and bottle backstories.

Collectors love to debate whether their pieces washed in from deeper waters or sat under their beaches for years and were just revealed. LaMotte doesn’t have easy answers. “Probably both,” he says with a crinkle-eyed shrug. (He does, however, know that the fantasy of sinking a bag of newly broken blue bottles offshore and retrieving fully cooked specimens a few years later doesn’t work. Sorry.)

After a couple of hours, I have over 300 pieces. I’m not sure any are Shard of the Year contenders, but glass season is just getting into full swing: Late summer and fall storms churn up the most treasures. And the two-day NASGA convention—this year in Hyannis, Mass.—starts on Oct. 9. So we all still have plenty of time to search.

[Stephen Fried](#) is an adjunct professor at Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. His new book is "[Appetite for America: How Visionary Businessman Fred Harvey Built a Railroad Hospitality Empire That Civilized the Wild West.](#)"

### Glass Consciousness

- Greens and browns are common.
- Blues are harder to find — but not impossible: Cobalt or cornflower blues crop up once in every 250–500 pieces.
- Aqua and seafoam are rarer, but those sea-glass colors are now common in home decorating.
- Most purples, LaMotte says, were originally clear; the manganese in them slowly oxidized into the rarer hue.
- Glassing holy grails: true yellows, oranges, and the beloved - and ultra-scarce - red.



Some rare color sea glass

From <http://www.parade.com>.

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### Jewellers Warned Against Misrepresenting Gems

9/6/2010

Gem expert Ted Themelis warned jewelers they must be careful not to hide treatments of gemstones or use misleading definitions, in a seminar at the Sydney trade fair.

Starting off his presentation by debunking the popular myth that gemstones are always beautiful, rare, portable and valuable, Themelis talked to jewellers about the common misconceptions that often take place with gemstones.

“If you say a gem has been enhanced, it increases sales because of the notion it has made the gem better. If you say the gem has been treated, it has negative connotations because it suggests the gem has been subject to some processes,” he said.

Themelis, who has worked in the gem identification and treatment field for more than 30 years, pointed out that treating gems can often improve their overall appearance. He used the example of rubies with surface-reaching fractures where lead-filling restored them to a colour-improved, fracture-filled state.

“Without treatments, there would be no ruby business. Twenty or so years ago a treated ruby was an exception rather than the rule; nowadays it is the opposite. I can safely say that almost all rubies in the market are treated one way or another.”

That aside, Themelis warned jewellers that lead-filled rubies are neither stable nor durable and went so far as to say they should not be used in jewellery manufacturing. He used the example of a lead-filled ruby eroding in a glass of lime juice after merely a day, due to its instability and reduced endurance after the treatment.

Themelis advised all jewellers to always disclose when a gem has been treated. However, he conceded that one of the big issues for retailers is that many often cannot tell when a gem has been treated. This is despite the 2005 ACCC ruling that all gemstones’ treatments must be disclosed.

Kathryn Wyatt, the GAA’s federal publicity and marketing manager, told Jeweller, “What makes this issue current now is that there are more treatments out there and jewellers must be made aware of the treatments – even if they can’t tell for themselves.”

Failure to comply with the ACCC disclosure ruling could result in fines of up to \$220,000 for individuals and \$1.1 million for companies, with the added cost of corrective advertising.

Themelis also said, “To be called a true gem, a stone should be untreated”. All others should be called, “treated (or processed) gems”.

He claimed even the terms ‘semi-precious’ and ‘precious’ were misleading. “I think the terms ‘semi-precious’ and ‘precious’ should be abolished. You can have a high quality amethyst [semi-precious

stone] that costs more than a low quality ruby [precious stone],” he said.

The Bangkok-based expert also urged jewellers to refrain from using “geographical markers” as a selling point for low-quality gems.

“Geographical markers should only be used for true classical localities with historical value, hence their added premium. If sapphires are mined from old mines in Kashmir, rubies and sapphires in Mogok (Burma, now Myanmar) then that’s fine – but not if they’re from new mines in the same country. That leads to misrepresentation of the gem”, he explained.

Ted Themelis was a guest of the GAA and presented his seminar at the Sydney trade fair last week.

From <http://www.jewellermagazine.com>

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## February 2010 Gem & Mineral Shows

*More shows can be found at*

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

27-12—TUCSON, AZ: Show; Eons Expositions LLC; 600 22nd St., northeast corner of I-10 and 22nd St.; 9-7 daily; free admission; minerals, fossils, rough, gems, jewelry, amber, meteorites; contact Lowell Carhart, 7514 Antelope Meadows Circle, Peyton, CO 80831, (516) 818-1228; e-mail: lowellcarhart@yahoo.com; Web site: www.22ndStreetShow.com

28-13—TUCSON, AZ: Show; ColorWright; ColorWright Warehouse, 1201 N. Main Ave.; 10-6 daily; free admission; cutting and carving rough, slabs, cabochons, gemology equipment, fossils, fossil preparation equipment, Covington lapidary equipment, new Highland Park slab saws, books, jewelry; contact Rob Kulakofsky, 1201 N. Main Ave., Tucson, AZ 85705, (520) 792-1439; e-mail: rk3@color-wright.com; Web site: www.rglshow.com

29-12—TUCSON, AZ: Show, “AZ Mineral & Fossil Show”; Martin Zinn Expositions; The Hotel Tucson City Center (formerly InnSuites), 475 N. Granada; 10-6 daily, final day 10-5; free admission; more than 400 dealers, Artists’ Gallery, four locations, free shuttle; contact Martin Zinn Expositions, P.O. Box 665, Bernalillo, NM 87004-0665; e-mail: mzexpos@aol.com; Web site: www.mzexpos.com

29-12—TUCSON, AZ: Show, “AZ Mineral & Fossil Show”; Martin Zinn Expositions; The Mineral & Fossil Marketplace, 1333 N. Oracle Rd.; 10-6 daily, final day 10-5; free admission; more than 400 dealers, four locations, free shuttle; contact Martin Zinn Expositions, P.O. Box 665, Bernalillo, NM 87004-0665; e-mail: mzexpos@aol.com; Web site: www.mzexpos.com

29-12—TUCSON, AZ: Show, “AZ Mineral & Fossil Show”; Martin Zinn Expositions; Quality Inn-Benson Hwy., 1025 E. Benson Hwy.; 10-6 daily, final day 10-5; free admission; more than 400 dealers, four locations, free shuttle; contact Martin Zinn Expositions, P.O. Box 665, Bernalillo, NM 87004-0665; e-mail: mzexpos@aol.com; Web site: www.mzexpos.com

29-12—TUCSON, AZ: Show, “AZ Mineral & Fossil Show”; Martin Zinn Expositions; Ramada Ltd., 665 N. Freeway; 10-6 daily, final day 10-5; free admission; more than 400 dealers, four locations, free shuttle; contact Martin Zinn Expositions, P.O. Box 665, Bernalillo, NM 87004-0665; e-mail: mzexpos@aol.com; Web site: www.mzexpos.com

31-6—TUCSON, AZ: Wholesale show; AZ Global Gem & Jewelry; The Hotel AZ, 181 W. Broadway; Mon. 10-6, Tue. 10-6, Wed. 10-6, Thu. 10-6, Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-6; contact Ron Swanson, (520) 396-4469; e-mail: ron@aggjs.com; Web site: www.aggjs.com

1-28—QUARTZSITE, AZ: Show, “Desert Gardens International Gem & Mineral Show”; Desert Gardens RV Park; 1064 Kuehn St. (I-10 Exit 17, south side); 9-6 daily; free admission; crystals, minerals, rough, polished, jewelry, lapidary equipment; contact Sharon or Sandy, 1064 Kuehn St., Quartzsite, AZ 85346, (928) 927-6361; e-mail: info@desertgardensrvpark.net; Web site: www.desertgardensrvpark.net

4-6—ROSEVILLE, CA: Show; Gem Faire Inc.; Placer County Fairgrounds, 800 All America City Blvd.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

10-13—TUCSON, AZ: Show; Tucson Gem & Mineral Society; Tucson Convention Center, 260 S. Church St.; Thu. 10-6, Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$10, seniors and active military \$2 off Fri. admission, children under 14 free with adult; contact TGMS, P.O. Box 42588, Tucson, AZ 85733, (520) 322-5773; e-mail: tgms@tgms.org; Web site: www.tgms.org

11-13—SANTA MONICA, CA: Show; Gem Faire Inc.; Santa Monica Civic Auditorium, 1855 Main St.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

18-20—SANTA BARBARA, CA: Show; Gem Faire Inc.; Earl Warren Showgrounds/Exhibit Hall, 3400 Calle Real; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5;

\$7 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

18-27—INDIO, CA: Show, “Riverside County Fair & National Date Festival”; San Geronio Mineral & Gem Society; Riverside County Fair & National Date Festival, Gem & Mineral Bldg., 46-350 Arabia St.; 10-10 daily; adults \$8, seniors \$7, students \$6, children free; 16 dealers, 108 lapidary display cases, lapidary demonstrations, geode cutting and sales; contact Bert Grisham, 1029 N. 8th St., Banning, CA 92220, (951) 849-1674; e-mail: bert67@verizon.net

19-20—ANTIOCH, CA: Show; Antioch Lapidary Club; Contra Costa Fairgrounds, 1201 W. 10th St.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$3, children 12 and under, active military with ID, and Scouts in uniform free; jewelry, gems, findings, supplies, tools, auction, grab bags, exhibits, demonstrations, kids’ projects; contact Brenda Miguel, 800 Bluerock Dr., Antioch, CA 94509, (925) 301-6957; e-mail: brenda.miguel@yahoo.com; Web site: www.antiochlapidaryclub.tripod.com

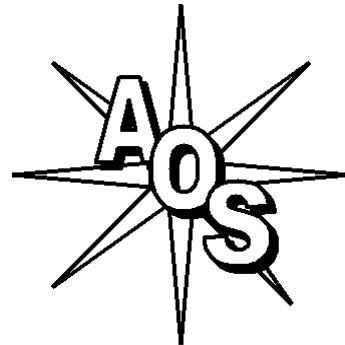
25-27—COSTA MESA, CA: Show; Gem Faire Inc.; OC Fair & Event Center/Bldg. 10, 88 Fair Dr. Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

25-27—GOLDEN, CO: Show; Denver Gem & Mineral Guild; Jefferson County Fairgrounds, 15200 W. 6th Ave.; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 11-5; free admission; gem-cutting demonstrations, geode cutting, mineral sample bags, mineral displays, dealers, gems, minerals, fossils, geodes, jewelry, books; contact Joseph Payne, 6101 S Logan Ct., Centennial, CO 80121, (303) 783-0221; e-mail: jpayne@englewoodgov.org; Web site: www.denvergem.org

25-27—NEWARK, CA: Annual show and sale; Mineral & Gem Society of Castro Valley; Newark Pavilion, 6430 Thornton Ave.; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$6 (3-day pass), coupon on Web site; children under 12 free with adult; rare Ice Age fossils, fluorescent rock display, 48 display cases, 40 dealers, eight lapidary demonstrations, rocks, minerals, jewelry, gemstones, fossils, faceted stones, beads, petrified wood, lapidary equipment, jewelry making supplies, kids’ Spinning Wheel, live auction, door prizes; contact Larry Ham, P.O. Box 2145, Castro Valley, CA 94546, (510) 887-9007; e-mail: showchair@msgscv.org; Web site: www.msgscv.org

26—TALLAHASSEE, FL: Show and sale; Prehistoric FL; Elks Lodge, 276 N. Magnolia Dr.; Sat. 8-3; adults \$3, children free; fossils, arrowheads, displays, sales, fossil identification, authentication and appraisal, books, T-shirts, posters, display cases; contact Nate Curtis, 4788 Leah Lane, Tallahassee, FL 32303, (850) 591-2780; e-mail: info@prehistoricFL.com; Web site: www.PrehistoricFL.com

26-27—SAN FRANCISCO, CA: Show, “San Francisco Crystal Fair”; Pacific Crystal Guild; Fort Mason Center, 99 Marina Blvd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; adults \$6, ages 12 and under free; 30 dealers, minerals, gems, crystals, beads, metaphysical healing tools; contact Jerry Tomlinson, P.O. Box 1371, Sausalito, CA 94966, (415) 383-7837; e-mail: jerry@crystalfair.com; Web site: www.crystalfair.com



## Opal Business for Sale [Australian Opal Imports.com](http://AustralianOpalImports.com)

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Tuesday-Saturday 10am-3pm. Appointments Also Available

## CLEARANCE Queensland Boulder Opal

We are clearing out  
our Opal collection

Total purchases up to \$2500 = 40% off

Total purchase up to \$5000 – 50% off

Total purchase over \$5000 – 60% off

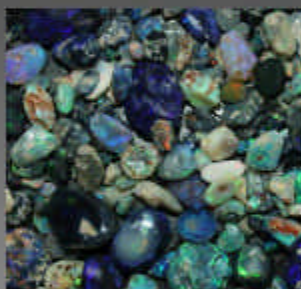
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# Opal Wilderness



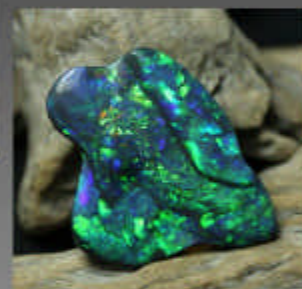
**Rough**



**Rubs**



**Cut**



**Carvings**

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Australia

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# American Opal Society Membership Application

FILL IN APPLICABLE INFORMATION		DUES / FEES)	AMOUNT PAID
DUES: SELECT ONE	RENEWING MEMBERS	\$30	
	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](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](mailto:membership@opalsociety.org).

NAME		
BUSINESS NAME		
ADDRESS		APT # or PO BOX
CITY		STATE
ZIP or POSTAL CODE		COUNTRY (IF OUTSIDE USA)
PHONE - Home ( )	PHONE - Business ( )	FAX ( )
E-MAIL		
WEBSITE		
OCCUPATION		HOBBIES AND INTERESTS

**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.

- Address   
 Phone   
 E-mail   
 Website

Please sign here: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Editor-Jim Pisani  
Please address all inquiries and exchange newsletters to:  
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Garden Grove, CA 92842-4875  
E-mail: [editor@opalsociety.org](mailto:editor@opalsociety.org)

**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 #44 Issue #2  
February 2011**

## Some Topics In This Issue:

- New OpalSociety Group on Internet
- Will Shaw's Mini-Cutter
- Lloviznando Opal
- Huge Gold Nugget Found in Sierra
- Benitoite
- Sea Glass
- Misrepresenting Gems



## Important Dates:

**February 10** - General Meeting  
Agenda to be announced at the meeting

**February 10th  
Agenda to be announced  
at the meeting**

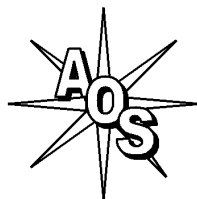
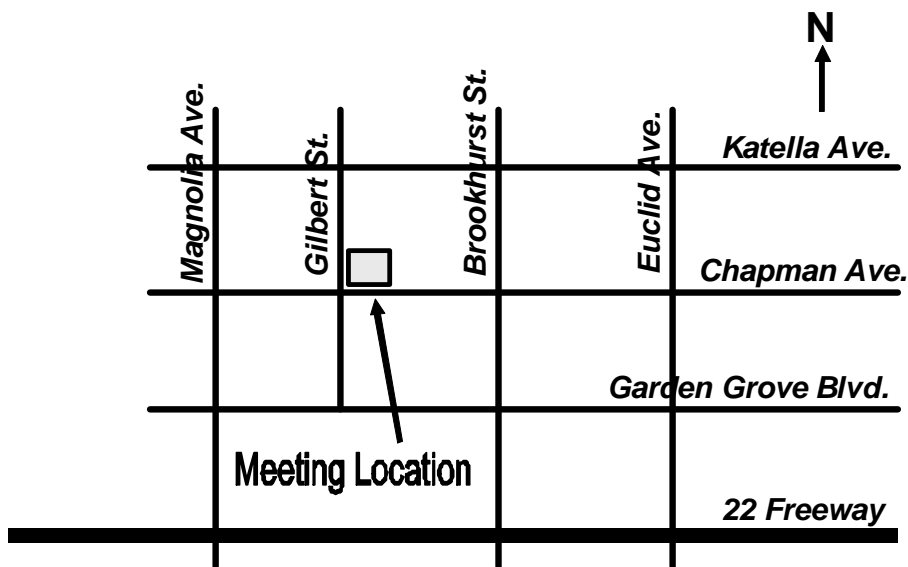
### — GENERAL MEETINGS —

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

<http://OpalSociety.org>

Pete Goetz  
LaVerne Christenson  
Jim Pisani  
Gene LeVan

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Treasurer  
Editor & Webmaster  
Show Chairman

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email: [finelackopal@sprynet.com](mailto:finelackopal@sprynet.com)