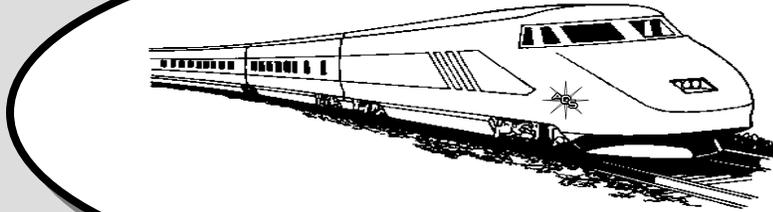


The Opal Express

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President's Message

By Pete Goetz

Its spring time and you all know what that means, right?? Your right! It's one more season closer to the annual OPAL & Gem Show. How do I know that you say? My calendar reminds me every time I check it. I really enjoy our show. There is a lot of eye candy for the window shoppers, bargains for the novice (and us not so novice types), there is education for the gray matter, and if you want to spend a few extra dollars, well, you can do that as well. So, why did I remind you of all this?? All this fun take's a bit of doing. And, (I don't know if you can start a sentence with “and”?) you can help. That's right **you can help** and get paid the huge sum of \$00.00 per hour. All our staff gets paid this salary, just ask Jim Pisani our Webmaster, or LaVerne Christenson our Treasurer, or any of the Board Members. Some of this people put almost as much time into the AOS as they do their regular jobs.

These folks could use some help. How can you help?? Some of our inactive members could become a little more active. All members could recruit new members, most of us belong to other Rock and Mineral related organizations, seek these folks out - talk OPAL to them. Invite them to our General Meeting or OPAL Show. You can volunteers to help out at the OPAL Show, particularly at set-up and tear down, help out at the reception desk, or food service. We not only need your muscle but, we need your ideas or different ways of doing the 'same old thing'. This could be selling point to prospective members, that is, they could be part of a growing and changing American Opal Society. Come to the General meetings and socialize with you fellow Opalholics, (you never know, you could get Opalized again, or is it energized). There are a lot of small tasks that need doing to putting together an international gem show. Some of these are more important than others but they must all be done in order for the show to successful.

Last month we were treated to an interesting lecture/demonstration on Glass Crafts and bead making presented by Bob Bradley. Pretty fancy glass work, Mr. Bradley. Here's a good reason to be at the General meeting this week: **Intarsia Jewelry: What it is and how to do it., by Charlie Mann.**

Remember; Don't think Snow, think OPALS!

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Members Only Website Password

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

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April's Speaker: Charlie Mann

Charlie Mann will be April's speaker. Charlie will give a presentation and demonstration on his unique method of making Intarsia Jewelry. Charlie will use opal in his demo.

Charlie was born in Kansas City on December 23, 1927. After he was graduated from High School in 1946, he moved to California. There he enlisted in the Navy and served in Japan for two years during the occupation. He got his degree from Pasadena City College in 1951. He got married the same year, and had one son. He worked as a journeyman machinist for the Berteau Company for 23 years. He then went on to work for several other firms, becoming the director of manufacturing for the Loud Company. His first wife passed away in 1985 and Charlie remarried Elaine Niemann in 1987.

Charlie first became interested in lapidary in 1954. He made his own equipment and worked at his hobby off and on until he retired in 1992. He then entered into the Saddleback College Emeritus class for Jewelry, which was held in Leisure World. In 1993, he entered the lapidary class and started to make intarsia jewelry under the tutelage of Connie Grundke.



Charlie Mann



Examples of Charlie's Intarsia

The AOS is honored to be the first publisher of the true opal mining memoirs of Peter Greisl. Peter arrived with his wife in Australia in 1963 from Austria at the age of 20. They went to the South Australian Opal Fields - Andamooka in July of 1969 at the age of 26 and lived and worked there till the end of 1973. He now lives in Queensland about 3,500 km South East of Andamooka and is writing his Andamooka memoirs at the age of 67.

His story is a first hand description of the trials and tribulations an opal miner in Andamooka and of and is part of its history. Thank you, Peter, for taking the time to record it and allow us to publish.

We will be publishing 1 to 2 chapters at a time as a continuing story as it would be too much for one edition.
The Editor

From Rags to Riches & Disasters

By Peter Greisl

Chapter 1 – “My Dream”

I just turned 17 years and finished my apprenticeship as a Butcher and Sausage maker when I had been drafted to serve my country for the next 2 years in the armed forces, Just before I turned 19 I met Chris at the Town about 80 km out of Vienna, where I had been stationed during my compulsory service, I had planned that after the service I was going back to Vienna to my parents place and find myself a good job and contemplate what I will do with my life. But this did not quite happen as planned, due to the fact that I fell in love with Chris and she felt the same way about me. So after a total of nine month courtship we decided to get married and we were going to live in Vienna, temporarily with my parents till we found suitable accommodation.

We did get married in Vienna with a very small reception of immediate family.

Chris and I we both found jobs at the Same Radio Manufacturing plant and we were looking for accommodation and it was very hard, the only thing I could get was a cellar in an apartment block where they did store coal for the winter. We took it and I lined all the walls, put some lightning in, Lino on the floor and a few furniture. At least it was our own place and we could come and do as we wanted, and did not have to answer to anyone. But it was not healthy.

At this time I left the factory and got a job with the Austrian Postal Service as a Telegram delivery guy and a Motor Scooter, that is where I met a colleague who has been to Australia and he told me all sorts of things about it, the ruggedness and its beautiful beaches etc. He gave me some brochures and there was amongst it one which were advertising for Migrants. "Come to Australia the Land of Milk and Honey."

I did take them home and showed Chris and she was excited as much as I was.

We did get in touch with the immigration authorities and got all the application.

Everything went great except for the part of Chris had been pregnant and one of the questions was about pregnancy and how far advanced it was we had to supply a certificate from a Medical Practitioner that the child in not due till three month after arrival in Australia.

Fortunately our family Doctor knew me quite well and he organized a certificate which satisfied the Immigration Authorities.

After about three month we received notification that we can migrate to Australia.

Couple days before the departure we had a huge going away party with relatives and friends. We were so excited about our new life in a new country.

The next day we were taken by our family with a Minibus to the Airport in Vienna

Where we boarded this huge Qantas Plane destined for Sydney Australia.

Chris and I arrived in Australia in Sydney in Nov. 1963 from Vienna, Austria.

We arrived at Kingsford Smith Airport in Sydney and it was stinking hot, having left Austria in winter time with 12 degrees minus and we had here at the Airport 29 degrees plus. After passing through Customs we assembled and were divided into groups which fitted a 12-seater bus and we were taken to a Migrant Hostel in East Hills near Liverpool.

This was the first encounter we had with cockroaches and they were not small, you could just about throw a saddle on and use it in pigmy races.

That was when Chris lost her cool which she seldom does and flew in to the Managers Office and screamed from the top of her lungs she wants to be sent back to Austria immediately or taken to a place which is not infested with every possible creepy crawly. The Manager sent straight away a maintenance man which sprayed the place and we could not get in for a couple of hours.

Actually Chris was very lucky, while she was ranting and raving at the manager's office, I killed a six inch long bloody Centipede, I did not show her as I am sure she would have started hitch hiking back home.

It was only to be for a few days until we were placed in a more permanent accommodation in another Hostel closer to Sydney.

After a couple of days we got transferred to a Hostel in Matraville which is near Maroubra and La Perouse which was not to bad and quite comfortable it had two rooms and one was set up for a baby, with cot etc.

On the 19th of January Chris has given birth to a beautiful baby girl, not in April as the certificate stated.

We did not speak any English other then yes and no, but we were not quite sure when to say yes and when to say no. I got several jobs which were on assembly lines in manufacturing plants and motor cars.

The first couple of years we were living in a Migrant Hostel in Matraville, and tried to save as much money as possible as we arrived only with 5 Pounds (currency) in Australia.

So I went around by foot and public transport with my dictionary to find work. There was one funny incident. As the Hostel was close to Laparouse were the Jail was, which I did not know it was a Jail, I saw this massive building with the huge iron door I thought it was a Factory. So I knocked on the huge door and this guy came out in a Uniform, and I said in my highly educated English language, "Me want job". the guy replied "You bloody well piss off or I give you a f...g job.", well I was so disgusted and when I told people in the hostel they cracked up laughing, I could not understand what was so funny till they told what this building was.

Then I got a job in British Leyland working on an assembly line, the foreman was a real bastard, first he gave three nuts and a air spanner which I had to screw the nuts on the chassis of the Mini Minor car, to begin with I had to run after the car to perform this task, few days later I managed so I could wait for the car to arrive on my spot, he seen that and he gave me another two to screw on, again it took me a while to master that but I managed these 5 nuts quite comfortably. When he seen that I was again waiting for the car to get to my Spot he came up and he gave me a couple bolts and nuts to put on as well.

Well that broke the camel's back, I grabbed him by the scruff of his neck and I said to him in a very strong and angry Voice, "I am going to shove these nuts and bolts down your throat and spanner up your arse and tighten the bastards until you shit metal shavings" He backed off and screamed "your fired".

Well I never was shy in finding work and again I found a job in Botany at Johnson and Johnson Plant in a printing department, and I spent a couple years there.

We saved enough money to put down a deposit and bought a house in St. Mary's near Penrith.

By then I had transferred my license to an Australian one and purchased an old bomb a Ford Zephyr. I was travelling to Botany every day, which was not very economical, anyhow later I got work at St Mary's as a Spot welder, and we stayed there till 1967. We sold the house did make very little money on it as we had a high a private mortgage from the builder. We moved to Leichardt in Sydney. That was when I got interested in opal. It was we were window shopping in George Street Sydney where I saw for the first time a very nice stone – Opal.

I was mesmerized by its beauty and all the colours it displayed. I had to go into the shop and had to find out more about opal. The Sales person was very friendly, of course in the hope she would sell something, she told me the opal is the birthstone of people born in October, which I was. She also mentioned the opal fields of Lightning Ridge, Coober Pedy and Andamooka. I told her I am not buying anything as I could not afford such a prize, but if you could tell me are there any publications available of this gem and she put me in the direction of Angus & Robertson which were also in George Street. I purchased several books and read and studied them and I was hooked, I told my wife Chris that one day I will go opal mining this is my destiny, she replied "Darling if this is what you want to do I will not object, follow your dream". I worked for a couple of years at a BP Service Station as a grease monkey but my mind was always on opal, like I was hypnotized I could not put it out of my mind, I read stories of opal miners, of their luck and their disappointments, and deep down in my heart I felt I have to follow this dream otherwise I could never settle down to a normal family life not knowing if I could make a success or a failure. I noticed in the Sydney Morning Herald in the positions available section, there are miners wanted in Mount Isa no experience necessary, they offered a great wages so I sent away a application letter and hoped that I would get this job so I can get enough money together to support me and my family on the opal fields for some time, I had a good friend whose name was Herman and his wife's name was Hilda, and they lived not far from us. I told him about this job offer and he expressed interest, so he sent away as well. If we got the job what we were going to do was he gives up his apartment and his wife moves in with my wife as we had two bedrooms and they could use one of them, so we could save on rent and they could as well as we would be coming home every month just for 4 days then back to Mount Isa, we were going to do this for 2 years just to save money as the pay was incredible. And I would be able to follow my Dream and go to Andamooka to mine this great gem which has me captured.

Anyhow I sent away in March and did not hear till end of April. We were accepted and they want us to be there in August. This was a reason to celebrate the fore of us went out to dinner and had a great time. At the restaurant I got up from my chair and said "Lets drink a toast to our new jobs and a great future", we toasted and drank, but before we sat down I said, "Now let's have another toast to something which is very important to me apart from my lovely wife and daughter.

This time let's toast to a temptress which captured my heart, to opal and its unrivaled beauty." Herman and Hilda looked at each other bewildered, but my wife Chris she looked at me and smiled and said "to your dream darling and opal".

Hilda said to Chris, what's this all about? Chris said to her "This is something Peter has to do otherwise he will never settle down and find peace". She replied "do what?" Chris replied "go mining for Opal" Hilda said "you both are nuts."

So I had a brain wave, I said to Herman why don't we leave 6 weeks earlier and go via Andamooka and have a look around and do a bit of mining. He agreed and so did our women.

I purchased picks and shovels, carbide lamps and plenty of carbide made a rope ladder and I was set to become an opal miner.

Well we set of and started our journey that time I had a brand New VW TS 1600 Fastback which I was paying off. We got to Adelaide and I went to get the miners right, by the way I also made up 8 Pegs so we can peg 2 claims. We got to Andamooka at record time and we got into the centre of the Town where we met the town drunk Rudi, another Austrian.

Below is my Car which made the Journey to Andamooka and Back to Sydney and back to Andamooka, where it died tragically.



My TS 1600 VW Fastback!

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Chapter 2 - "Tee Tree Hill"

Well we parked the car outside the Co-Op and got out and Rudi shouted out, "Came to try your luck" to which I replied, "Well we are more less passing through on the way to Mount Isa, but like to look and scratch around a bit to see if we lucky." Rudi smiled and replied "Got any idea about opal mining?" I said "yes, I am an expert in theory, read about every book printed but never been to the opal fields before." Rudi laughed out and said "Many book experts came through and pissed off after a couple of days." I ignored this remark and said to him "is there a place where we can stay for a few days?," he replied, "Yes just a couple hundred yards down the road you find Gusses Opal Restaurant; I am sure he got a place where you can camp out." I thanked him and we went to the Opal Restaurant and they had a large room out the back with some camping stretchers in it, we were sort of disappointed and that influenced my feeling about the opal fields as I like to sleep in a bed. So I said to Herman "Well it is only for a few days."

After we unloaded our personal gear we drove back to the Co-Op and Rudi was still sitting outside and was nursing a flagon of wine.

We stopped, I got and sat next to him and I thought well maybe this guy can head us in the right direction, so I introduced myself to him and started the conversation about him being an Austrian and so was I, and led it towards where we could start looking for opal. I said of course in our native tongue, "*Hast du eine ahnung wo wir hin gehen koennen um einen Opal zu finden*", which meant, "Where do you think we can go to find some opal?" He stood up and smiled spread his hands like Jesus Christ and said "You are in Opal Country; go where ever you want as long as you don't get on to someone else's claim," And then he gives the 3rd degree and asks "have you got miners rights, pegs, pick and shovel, 20 meter rope, lamps, 13 gallon bucket and lot of patience and stamina?" I replied "we got everything except a bucket, so where do you suggest?" He said "You should be looking in abandoned mine shafts as sometimes people pull out and leave something behind, and with a little more digging you could find something." He continued "The best place I can recommend is Tee Tree Hill, there are quite a few empty claims

where the shaft has not been filled in by dozers." I asked where is that and he pointed towards a trek which is winding around some dumps etc. "Follow this road for about a couple of miles and you will see a lonely tree sitting there that is Tee Tree Hill. Find a shaft which is not filled in and throw your rope down to measure how deep it is and if not too deep, climb down and look around maybe you find a tunnel opening; shine you light along the wall and see if you see some colour shining at you, and dig."

Well I looked at Herman and he looked at me shrugged his shoulders and said "well lets go."

I winked at him and said "wait a minute" I said to Rudi, "listen how about you show us and we bring you back and give you a couple bucks for your time." Rudi said, "Ok but I am not going to work with you I only help you to find a shaft." I said "Ok let's go". We got in the car and Rudi guided us around dumps and shafts on this narrow track, and finally I saw the Tree.

Rudi kept looking out the window and got me to stop the car we got out and started to wander around and he kept looking in all the shafts of which many were filled in or collapsed.

He then shouted out, "That's it, get your rope." I got the rope and got to the shaft which was surrounded by the dumped material, I gave him the rope and he tied a rock to it and lowered down, and after the rock bottomed we had about 24 feet of rope from our 60 foot left.

He pulled it up and started making knots in it every 3 feet; he said "you need this to make it easier to climb up and down". Then he said "you need another rope to pull up the bucket." I said, "I am going to buy one in town." He said "OK, that's it, now you go and measure 150 ft in all four directions and put your pegs in." I thanked him and gave him 20 bucks which I am sure he will have converted to flagons before the night was out. I said to Herman "you take him back and buy at the co-op another 60 feet of rope". Herman left with Rudi and I had all our equipment and I remembered the rope ladder I made, which was 20 meters long, I made it out of leather straps and 1.5 inch doweling. I got a couple pegs hammered them in to the side of the shaft and hooked the rope ladder to it. I started climbing down on the rope and then I switched to the rope ladder,

Well, she was supporting me quite well but it was swaying backwards so I had to get some more steel pegs which I had plenty of and secured to ladder every 4 feet to the shaft wall.

After I did all that I was quite excited and thought my dream has started.

I got the carbide lamps put carbide in and water and lit them after a while to make sure they were working OK, which they did.

I threw down the shaft picks and shovels and with my roll of string I lowered the carbide lamps down. And I was ready to find my fortune.

I stepped out about 150 feet in all directions and placed the pegs. Now we were official opal miners.

In the mean time Herman arrived back and he brought about 100 feet of rope which was used he said the Co-op Manager gave it to him as he had no new rope in stock until the truck comes from Adelaide which was in a few days so he gave him this one to use.

I said to Herman "Well my friend let's make it happening" So I went down first as I reached the bottom, there was only a very little opening in to a tunnel. I shouted out to Herman "I have to move some dirt so we can get in to the tunnel throw me down some of the hessian bags I fill them with dirt and you can pull them up." I got these Bags from a Green grocer which had potatoes in it. I started picking at the dirt to loosen it so I could fill the hashed bags, and Herman pulled them up.

After about 20 Bags I got easy access to the tunnel, as I entered I shouted to Herman "come down" which he did I was lighting the Carbide lamps and we were ready to find out what's down here.

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Famous Opal People Tullie Cornthwaite Wollaston

Tullie Cornthwaite Wollaston (1863 - 1931), by unknown photographer, c1920, courtesy of State Library of South Australia. SLISA: B 16758.

WOLLASTON, TULLIE CORNTHWAITE (1863-1931), opal dealer, was born on 17 May 1863 at Port Lincoln, South Australia, fourth child of George Gledstones Wollaston, sheep farmer, and his wife Mary Glover, née MacGowan, both English born, and grandson of Archdeacon Wollaston. Registered at birth as Henry Herbert, next year he was baptized Tullie Cornthwaite; he was always known by that name. He grew up on his father's station at Lake Hamilton where he acquired a lifelong appreciation of the land and its flora and fauna. After boarding at the Collegiate School of St Peter, Adelaide, where he proved a capable athlete, in 1881 he entered the public service. On 30 December 1886 in the Glenelg Congregational Church he married Emma Sarah Manthorpe; they were to have eleven children. Resigning from the Survey Office, he worked as a private surveyor and draughtsman before becoming involved in mining and marketing sapphires and the gems found by David Lindsay.

During 1888 Wollaston learned of an opal discovery in the Kyabra Hills, Queensland. Backed by Adelaide investors, on 21 November he set out by rail with the surveyor Herbert Buttfield; from the State's north, they used camels to cross harsh terrain. They arrived early next year, inspected the opal strike, bought specimens and obtained leases. Wollaston then sailed for London only to find that dealers were suspicious of the superior Australian stone. Having sold a little which was worked by lapidarists and sent to the United States of America, he came back to Adelaide and formed a partnership with the solicitor David Morton Tweedie. Late in 1889 Wollaston examined opal specimens sent to him from White Cliffs, near Wilcannia, New South Wales. Visiting the new find, he met Edmund Francis Murphy who subsequently became his agent. Wollaston sold White Cliffs opal to European and American buyers in London; in 1897-99 he annually spent about £50,000 buying stones for sale abroad. His generous valuations caused Tweedie to break their partnership.

In 1905 Murphy began buying for him on the field at Lightning Ridge, New South Wales. Taking specimens of the 'black opal' to the world market in 1906-08, Wollaston again encountered skepticism; by 1911 he had more than he could sell. He was next engaged in an unsuccessful pearling venture off Broome, Western Australia. When opal was found early in 1915 at Stuart Range (later Coober Pedy), South Australia, Wollaston bought the first parcel; he took specimens to America in 1916 and sold a significant quantity to a firm in Paris in 1919. In the mid-1920s he backed efforts to develop the Uley graphite and limestone deposits near Port Lincoln. As a director of Graphite Ltd, he visited London in December 1929, but failed to attract interest in the company's mine which closed after his return in 1930.

From 1881 Wollaston had transacted numerous land deals in Adelaide and on Eyre Peninsula. He bought land in 1904 at Bridgewater in the Adelaide Hills where he established Raywood, planting many exotic and native trees and shrubs, and propagating the popular claret ash; nearby, about 1925, he also set up Ray



Nursery to encourage the planting of native flora. Raywood was later sold to (Sir) Alexander Downer and named Arbury Park; in 1965 it was transferred to the State government and again called Raywood. Wollaston's love of Australia's natural beauty shone through his publications, *The Spirit of the Child* (1914) and *Our Wattles* (1916). To accompany his display of opals at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, London, he wrote the semi-autobiographical *Opal: The Gem of the Never-Never* (1924).

Slim and dapper in appearance, Wollaston was a cultured, humane and religious man who loved children. He was hardy and resourceful in outback travel and 'fair and square' in business. Survived by his wife, three sons and six daughters, he died of cancer on 17 July 1931 at his Lower Mitcham home and was buried in St Jude's Anglican churchyard, Brighton, Adelaide. His estate was sworn for probate at £17,719.

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Author: Bernard O'Neil

Print Publication Details: Bernard O'Neil, 'Wollaston, Tullie Cornthwaite (1863 - 1931)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 12, Melbourne University Press, 1990, p. 556.

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Idaho's Spencer Opal Mine Rock Hounding Review

By Tim Bondy, the Bondyweb.Com author, 6/9/10



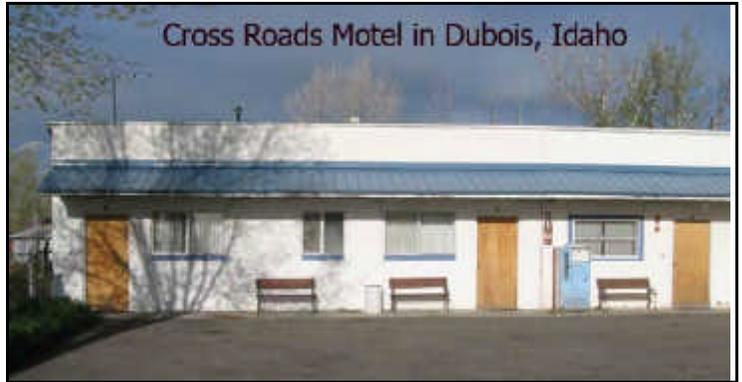
Spencer Opal Mine in Spencer, Idaho

The main objective for this vacation was rock hounding and the Spencer Opal Mine was our first destination. Spencer is located in eastern Idaho right off Interstate 15 and close to the Montana state-line. On Monday May 31st, 2010 we pulled up outside the Spencer Opal Cafe at about 9:15 AM. We decided to have breakfast in the cafe before trying our luck at finding some world class fire opal.

The breakfast and service at this small cafe was excellent. The employee's seemed to be very happy we were there and the food was hot, fresh and reasonably priced. The employee's attitude seemed to rub off on all the other customers also as they were talkative and friendly with us. Let's just call this a friendly family cafe.

Once we finished our breakfast, we paid the \$10 Entrance Fee into the mini-mine located out the backdoor of the cafe. As you can see in the picture at the top of this article, the mini-mine is just a fenced off area where the mine owners trucked in a huge pile of opal bearing rock. We were given a quick lesson on what to do and off we went. In general, you sit in a big dirt pile and slowly dig, scratch and examine rocks for that "little sparkle of fire" in the abundant pieces of opal.

The things you might need if you were to try your luck at fire opal'ing at Spencer's is a small rock hammer, or digging instrument, a spray bottle to squirt the dirt off the rocks, a pair of cheap old gloves and some patience. They provide buckets to put your rough



Cross Roads Motel in Dubois, Idaho

rock in to examine more closely later in the day. Eventually you will find some pieces of fire opal and you get to keep one pound of raw rock for the entrance fee. We found a few excellent fire opal specimens during this easy rock hounding day.

Where to Spend the Night?

There are not any hotels in Spencer, Idaho. The closest hotels are in Dubois, Idaho and Lima, Montana. We spent the night in the Crossroad Motel in Dubois. The Crossroads is a no-frills type of place but the price was right at \$38 a night.

It's an old 1960's type motel and the rooms are small and old. No luxuries such as internet, breakfast or comfy chairs. At least in the room we spent the night, the shower might be better skipped as hot water took about 20 minutes to arrive and there was enough water pressure to even wash my hair. Dubois is located about 15 miles south of Spencer so it's a quick trip up the Interstate to your rock hounding. Lima, Montana is about 30 miles to the north of Spencer and there are a couple hotels that look a little more modern but likely way more expensive.

Food and Restaurants near Spencer Idaho

By far the best place to eat in the Bubois/Spencer area is the Spencer Cafe. We ate dinner there and found the food to be excellent...maybe the best of the whole 6 day vacation. There is a cafe in Dubois but it wasn't open when we needed food. There is also a large gas station/massive convenience store in Dubois where you can get some fast food, ice cream or grocery type items.

Rock Hounding Review



This is just some of the opal containing rocks we brought home. All contain some "fire".

Spencer Opal is a great place to learn while you collect some cool rocks. A budding new rock hound might want to start at a place like this so you know what the raw ore/rock looks like in nature. Once you figure out what you are looking for in the woods and desert of Idaho, your chances of finding the stuff you want is much easier.

Links for More Information

Spencer Opal Mine and Cafe:
<http://www.spenceropalmines.com/>

Map to the Spencer, Idaho Area: [Google Maps link to the Spencer Idaho area](#)

Thanks for visiting and commenting on this outdoor and rockhounding article. From <http://www.bondyweb.com>

Thunder Eggs

By Fred Greef, Washington Agate Society

You know them when you see them, but they're not easy to describe. Scientist have studied them, but aren't sure just how they are formed. And where did they get that weird name, anyway?

To answer the last question: It is a Warm Spring Indian legend that tells of Mount Hood and Mount Jefferson Thunder Spirits becoming angry with one another. They hurled spherical rocks back and forth during violent thunder and lightning storms. The Spirits had stolen these weapons from the Thunderbirds' nests. Stray shots landed in the Warm Springs Indian Reservation where they can still be found today.

The thunder egg is the State Rock of Oregon although it is not technically a rock. Some of the nicest specimens and the most fruitful hunting areas are found east of Oregon's Cascade Mountains.

As the description, thunder eggs are balls of rhyolite matrix filled with agate, chalcedony, jasper, or opal. (Rhyolite is a fine grained rock composed of quartz and feldspar—Much like granite.) The rhyolite shell is often knobby and may have a ribbed pattern. The agate centers may be banded or contain plumes, moss-like inclusions, and /or fortifications or other patterns. Thunder eggs can also be hollow or lined with quartz crystals like geodes. Some eggs with multicolored plumes (flowers) in chalcedony are among the most valuable.

Friday plume thunder eggs from the Richardson Ranch have colorful bouquets of flowers and are most famous. Some eggs have clear centers and others contain white, red, yellow, orange, and blue in various combinations. Some of my favorites are those filled with pastel-colored jasper patterns. Thunder eggs can still be dug for a small fee in several locations on the Richardson Ranch near Madras, Oregon. Other nearby locations have included Kennedy Ranch east of Richardson Ranch, The Antelope Ranch south of Antelope, the Friend Ranch near Ashwood, and the hay Creek Ranch south of Richardson's. Most of these sites were fee basis digging locations, but are no longer open to the public.

Thunder eggs are also plentiful in the Ochoco National forest near Prineville. The Lucky Strike Mine has several beds open on a fee-dig basis. There are also several Prineville Chamber of Commerce sites where thunder eggs can still be dug for free. These include Whistler, White Fur, and White Rock Spring. The Succor Creek area near the Idaho border is a famous Oregon thunder egg location. And don't forget Thunder Egg Day around the first week of August, which is the annual show in Nyssa, Oregon close to Succor Creek. Kelly Creek near Lakeview is another well-known site.

Many other states have thunder eggs, including New Mexico where one of my favorites has been found near Deming. This type has black, red, and blue agate centers. It is fun to dig, cut, and polish these fascinating balls of colored pattern. Just don't throw any at me in a rainstorm.

Via Sooner Rockologist, 4/1999; via Breccia, 3/2011

April 2011 Gem & Mineral Shows

More shows can be found at

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

1—SANDY, UT: Show; Rings & Things; Salt Lake City Community College – Miller Campus, 9750 South 300 West; Fri. 12-4; free admission; gemstones not available in our catalog or online store, bead strands, 15% off many gemstone and bead strands, findings and stringing supplies; contact Dave Robertson, PO Box 450, Spokane, WA 99210, (800) 366-2156; e-mail: drobertson@rings-things.com; Web site: www.rings-things.com/Show/index.html

1-2—COLVILLE, WA: Annual spring show; Panorama Gem & Mineral Club; Fort Colville Grange Hall, Hwy. 20; Fri. 8:30-6, Sat. 9-5; contact Bill Allen, (509) 935-8779; e-mail: sago@theofficenet.com

1-3—EUGENE, OR: Show; Gem Faire Inc.; Lane County Events Center/Exhibit Hall, 796 W. 13th Ave.; 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

2-3—GRESHAM, OR: Show, "The Rock, Gem and Craft Show"; Mount Hood Rock Club; Mount Hood Community College Gym, 2600 SE Stark; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; free admission; free Easter Thunder egg Hunt Sat., Auction Sun.; contact Mary Jean Dowell, (360) 721-9095; e-mail: mjdowell@fs.fed.us

2-3—HELENA, MT: 64th annual show; Helena Mineral Society; Helena Civic Center, corner of Neill Ave. and Park Ave.; Sat. 9-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$1, children 12 and under free with adult; 25 dealers, jewelry, mineral specimens, rough and faceted gemstones, fossils, cutting rough, beads, equipment, children's activities (garnet hunt, ball toss, grab bags, silent auction), fluorescent mineral display, 20 showcases; contact Gary Parisi, P.O. Box 736, Helena, MT 59624, (406) 442-1226; e-mail: gjparisi72@yahoo.com; Web site: www.helenamineralsociety.org

2-3—LANCASTER, CA: Annual show; Antelope Valley Gem & Mineral Club; Lancaster High School, 44701 32nd St. W.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-5; free admission; dealers, auction table, demonstrations, displays, games, raffle, grand prize drawing; contact Susan (Chaisson) Walblom, 42122 52nd St., West Quartz Hill, CA 93534, (661) 943-1861; e-mail: av_gem@yahoo.com; Web site: www.avgem.weebly.com

2-3—LEMOORE, CA: Show; Lemoore Gem & Mineral Club; Lemoore Trinity Hall, 470 Champion St.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-6; free admission; contact Judy Pereira, (559) 924-4052

2-3—POCATELLO, ID: 54th annual show; South East ID Gem & Mineral Society; Bannock County Fairgrounds, Commercial Bldg.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; contact Kevin B. Taylor, 246 WA Ave., Pocatello, ID 83201, (208) 232-4269

23—BOISE, ID: Show; Rings & Things; Best Western Vista Inn at the Airport, 2645 Airport Way; Sun. 11-3; free admission; gemstones not available in our catalog or online store, bead strands, 15% off many gemstone and bead strands, findings and stringing supplies; contact Dave Robertson, PO Box 450, Spokane, WA 99210, (800) 366-2156; e-mail: drobertson@rings-things.com; Web site: www.rings-things.com/Show/index.html

8-10—EUREKA, CA: 10th annual wholesale and retail show, "Lost Coast Jewelry, Gem, Bead and Mineral Show"; Kasey Enterprises; Redwood Acres Fairgrounds, 3750 Harris St.; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-7, Sun. 10-5; adults \$3, seniors and students \$1.50 (free on Fri.), children 12 and under free with adult; minerals, gemstones, crystals, beads, pearls, gold nuggets, fine jewelry, gold and quartz, fossils, tools, door prizes; contact Diana, Kasey Enterprises, P.O. Box 2927, McKinleyville, CA 95519-2927, (707) 839-1358; e-mail: kaseyent@sbcglobal.net

8-10—TACOMA, WA: Show; Gem Faire Inc.; Tacoma Dome/Exhibition Hall, 2727 E. "D" 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

8-10—VISTA, CA: Annual show; San Diego County Council; Antique Gas and Steam Engine Museum, 2040 N. Santa Fe Ave.; free admission; Fri. 9-5, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; more than 40 dealers, gems, minerals, slabs, jewelry, raffle; contact Ray Pearce, (760) 726-7570

9—SEATTLE, WA: Show; Rings & Things; Seattle Center Pavilion, 305 Harrison St.; Sat. 12-4; free admission; gemstones not available in our catalog or online store, bead strands, 15% off many gemstone and bead strands, findings and stringing supplies; contact Dave Robertson, PO Box 450, Spokane, WA 99210, (800) 366-2156; e-mail: drobertson@rings-things.com; Web site: www.rings-things.com/Show/index.html

9-10—BELLINGHAM, WA: 50th anniversary show, "A 'Golden' Family Affair"; Mt. Baker Rock & Gem Club; Bloedel Donovan Park, 2214 Electric Ave.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; free admission; raffle, exhibits, rocks, fossils, gems, jewelry, dealers, door prizes, silent auction, lapidary, gold panning, black light, gem

cutting, demonstrations, kids' activities; contact Wes Gannaway, (360) 384-4209; e-mail: debnwes@comcast.net

9-10—KINGMAN, AZ: Show and sale; Mohave County Gemstoners; Kingman Academy of Learning, 3420 N Burbank; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; free admission; rough rock, slabs, cabs, jewelry, wire wrapping, silver and gold smithing, lapidary and jewelry fabrication equipment and supplies, demonstrations, raffles, prizes, children's activities, educational information, displays, crafts, fossils, minerals, silent auction, door prizes, cash raffle prizes; contact Mary Gann, PO Box 3992, Kingman, AZ 86402; e-mail: quadpol@aol.com; Web site: www.gemstoners.org

9-10—MARIPOSA, CA: 11th annual show, "Mountains of Minerals"; CA State Mining & Mineral Museum; Mariposa County Fairgrounds, Hwy. 49, 2 mi. south of Mariposa; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; free admission; vendors, mineral specimens, jewelry, lapidary, mineral exhibits, demonstrations, children's activities, speakers, raffles, silent auctions; contact Randy J. Bolt, (209) 742-7625; e-mail: rockmuseum@sti.net

9-10—PARADISE, CA: Show and sale, "Paradise of Gems"; Paradise Gem & Mineral Club; Elk Lodge 6309 Clark Rd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; adults \$2, seniors \$1, under 16 free; contact Manuel Garcia, 5659 Foster Rd., Paradise, CA 95969, (530) 877-7324; e-mail: mmpg@earthlink.net; Web site: www.Paradisegem.org

15-17—ALPINE, TX: Show, "Alpine Agate Festival"; Chihuahuan Desert Gem & Mineral Club; Alpine Civic Center, Hwy. 90W and 13th St. N; Fri. 9-6, Sat. 9-6, Sun. 11-5; free admission; South Central Federation convention, grand prize, door prizes, silent auctions, field trips, kids' corner, demo dealers; contact Mary Brogan, P.O. Box 1111, Alpine, TX 79831, (432) 386-2340; e-mail: marybrogan@rocketmail.com; Web site: www.cdgm.com

15-17—RICKREALL, OR: 56th annual show; Willamette Agate Mineral Society; Polk County Fairgrounds, 520 S. Pacific Hwy. W; Fri. 9-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4:30; contact Kristi Edwards, (541) 738-6811; e-mail: edwardskk@gmail.com

15-17—SAN DIEGO, CA: Gem Faire—Scottish Rite Event Center, 1895 Camino del Rio S. Gem Faire hours: Fri. 12pm-6pm, Sat. 10am-6pm, Sun. 10am-5pm. Admission \$7 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

15-17—SAN JOSE, CA: 56th annual show, "The Art of Stone"; Santa Clara Valley Gem & Mineral Society; Santa Clara County Fairgrounds, 344 Tully Rd.; Fri. 9-5, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$6, children under 12 free, coupon on Web site; 50 dealers, kids' area, demonstrations, speakers, fluorescent display, gold panning, displays; contact Marc Mullaney, (408) 265-1422; e-mail: info@scvgms.org; Web site: www.scvgms.org

16—BELLEVUE, WA: Show; Rings & Things; Bellevue Community College, 3000 Landerholm Circle SE; Sat. 11-3; free admission; gemstones not available in our catalog or online store, bead strands, 15% off many gemstone and bead strands, findings and stringing supplies; contact Dave Robertson, PO Box 450, Spokane, WA 99210, (800) 366-2156; e-mail: drobotson@rings-things.com; Web site: www.rings-things.com/Show/index.html

16-17—ID FALLS, ID: 46th annual show; ID Falls Gem & Mineral Society; ID Falls Recreation Center, Memorial St. and B St.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$2, children under 12 free; contact Kevin Landon, (208) 357-3847; e-mail: sklandon@bridgemail.com

16-17—KENNEWICK, WA: Annual show; Lakeside Gem & Mineral Club; Benton County Fairgrounds, 1500 S. Oak; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; adults \$5, children 14 and under free; door prizes, exhibits, dealers, fluorescent display, Kids' Korner, silent auction, geode cracker, demonstrations, gold panning, capping, faceting, intarsia, sphere making, wire wrapping; contact Dom Cataldo, P.O. Box 6652, Kennewick, WA 99336; e-mail: dac@bioguardtech.com

16-17—NEWBURY PARK, CA: Show; 37th annual show, "Pageant of a Thousand Gems"; Conejo Gem & Mineral Club; Borchard Park Community Center, 190 Reino Rd., corner of Reino Rd. and Borchard Rd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission; club member exhibits and sales, gems, jewelry, rocks, minerals, fossils, youth activities, lapidary and jewelry-making demonstrations; silent auction, door prizes; contact Richard or Mary Pat Weber, 4290 Misty Meadow St., Moorpark, CA 93021, (805)529-2524; e-mail: rewnews@sbcglobal.net; Web site: www.wcgm.com

16-17—WALNUT CREEK, CA: Show, "Contra Costa Crystal Fair"; Pacific Crystal Guild; Civic Park Community Center, 1375 Civic Dr.; 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

17—TIGARD, OR: Show; Rings & Things; Embassy Suites Hotel – WA Square, 9000 SW WA Square Rd.; Sun. 12-5; free admission; gemstones not available in our catalog or online store, bead strands, 15% off many gemstone and bead strands, findings and stringing supplies; contact Dave

Robertson, PO Box 450, Spokane, WA 99210, (800) 366-2156; e-mail: drobotson@rings-things.com; Web site: www.rings-things.com/Show/index.html

22-24—GRANTS PASS, OR: Show; Rogue Gem & Geology Club; Josephine County Fairgrounds, 1451 Fairgrounds Rd.; Fri. 9-5, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; adults \$1, children free; dealers, silent auction, door prizes, displays, demonstrations, kids' games; contact Mary Blankeship, P.O. Box 1224, Grants Pass, OR 97528, (541) 862-2989; e-mail: rockhoundclub@yahoo.com; Web site: www.roguegemandgeology.com

23-24—ELMA, WA: Show, "Earth's Treasures"; Grays Harbor Gem & Geology Society; Grays Harbor County Fairgrounds, 32 Elma/McCleary Rd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; contact Gary Emberly, 624 Fairmont Place, Aberdeen, WA 98520, (360) 533-6196; e-mail: Melissa624@hotmail.com

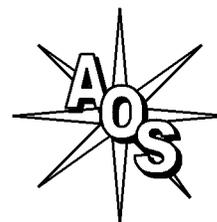
29-1—SANTA ROSA, CA: Show; Gem Faire Inc.; Sonoma County Fairgrounds/Grace Pavilion, 1350 Bennett Valley Rd.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

30-1—ANAHEIM, CA: Show; Searchers Gem & Mineral Society; Brookhurst Community Center, 2271 W. Crescent Ave.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4:30; free admission; special exhibit, gold panning, jewelry making for kids, silent auction, gemstones, hobby supplies, books, demonstrations, displays, door prizes; contact Beth Pelfrey, (714) 774-2754; e-mail: martin.swiderski@jacobs.com; Web site: www.searchersrocks.org

30-1—FRANKLIN, NJ: 39th annual show and swap; NJ Earth Science Assn., Franklin-Ogdensburg Mineralogical Society, Sterling Hill Mining Museum; Franklin School, 50 WA Ave.; Sat. 9-5:30, Sun. 10-5; adults \$5, children under 14 free with adult; contact Sterling Hill Mining Museum, (973) 209-7212

30-1—MEDFORD, OR: 56th annual show, "Diamonds Are Forever"; Roxy Ann Gem & Mineral Society; Medford Armory, 1701 S. Pacific Hwy.; Sat. 9-5:30, Sun. 10-4:30; exhibits, dealers, demonstrations, gold panning, silent auction, children's activities, door prizes; contact Janet Fields, 378 Dexter Way, Grants Pass, OR 97527, (541) 476-8937, or Sandy Roney, 1431 Elaine Way, Medford, OR 97501, (541) 734-0838; e-mail: mrsoney@prodial.us

30-1—SEATTLE, WA: Show; West Seattle Rock Club; Alki Masonic Temple, 4736 40th Ave. SW; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; contact Audrey Vogelpohl, (206) 932-3292; e-mail: avogelpohl@comcast.net; Web site: www.westseattlerockclub.org



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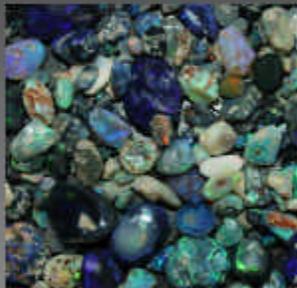
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Are Your Dues Due Now?
PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL. If your label shows the current month/year your dues are **DUE NOW**. If the date is older, your dues are overdue.
 A Renewal Grace Period of two months will be provided. If your dues are due 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
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Volume #44 Issue #4
April 2011

Some Topics In This Issue:

- From Rags to Riches & Disasters
 Chapter 1 – “My Dream”
 Chapter 2 - “Tee Tree Hill”
- Tullie Cornthwaite Wollaston
- Idaho’s Spencer Opal Mine
- Thunder Eggs

Important Dates:

April 5 - Board Meeting

April 14 - General Meeting:

Charlie Mann will be April’s speaker. Charlie will give a presentation and demonstration on his unique method of making Intarsia Jewelry.

TO:

April 14th Charlie Mann on Intarsia

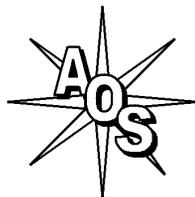
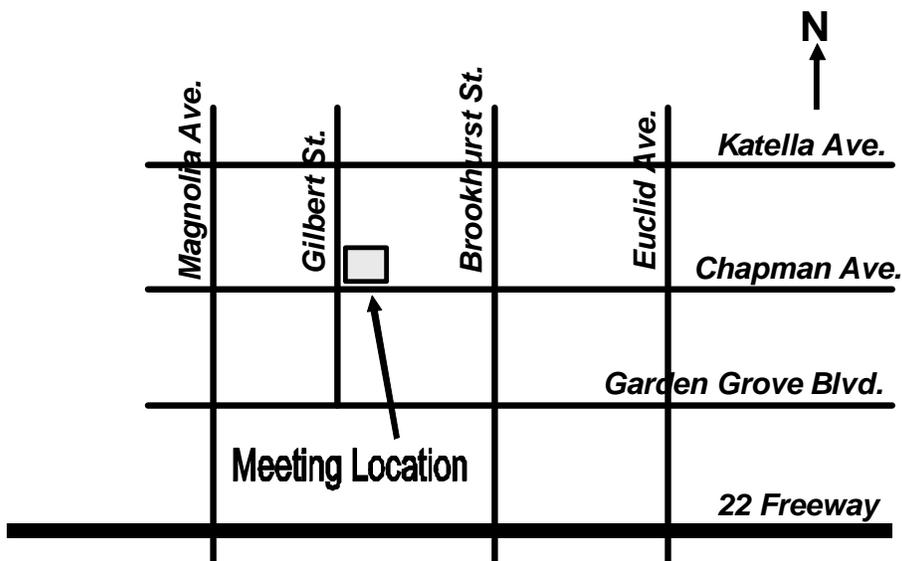
— GENERAL MEETINGS —

2nd Thurs. 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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