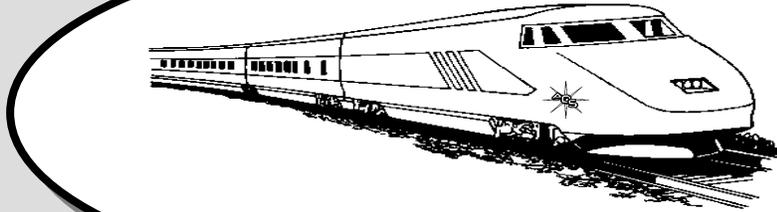


The Opal Express

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April 2013

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Hey fellow Opalholics,	

President's Message

By Pete Goetz

Hope all is well. Things here are bubbling a bit: Veronica has been doing an outstanding job of putting together the frameworks for our up-coming annual OPAL and gem show this November. The BOD are "pleasantly" going over and revising and revising etc. new vendor contracts, as well as the contract with the Phoenix Club.

As you have probably already guessed from the above, we are changing our venue this year. We will be occupying a 12,000 square foot facility with ample outside space for yet undetermined activities. (If you have any ideas call me 714 530 3530). I will fill you all in with more details later.

Of course, this brings up "who is willing to help". With a bigger venue, we will need more participation from the membership. I will list some of the areas where we will **need your help** in the up-coming editions of the **OPAL EXPRESS**.

The BOD has agreed to allow a wider range of vendors to participate in this year's OPAL and Gem Show.

The idea is to 'grow the show'. By offering our guests a wider selection of merchandise, along with our usual splendid array of OPAL and OPAL related products, 'we (that's all of us) will grow the show. More on the show later...

Pete Goetz

Members Only Website Password

AOS website's members only area: Name: "member" and Password: "opalyear".

April Speaker: Justin Zzyzx on So. Cal. Agates

This Thursday, April 11, Justin Zzyzx will give a talk on Agates of Southern California.

Justin is the owner of the Zzyzx Gallery of Natural Science in Los Angeles, CA (<http://www.zzyzgallery.com>). He also owns and manages <http://www.the-vug.com>, the largest mineralogical database online, and founded <http://www.fakeminerals.com>, and Rockhounding Videos (<http://www.rockhoundingvideos.com>)

The Opal Express

The American Opal Society

Justin Zzyzx has worked for over a decade within the greater mineral, rock, & gem collecting community.

He gives lectures and leads public field trips for many of the local Southern California mineral clubs and organizations. Through direct contact and hands on education, he is able to promote a greater understanding of the vast mineral resources within, not only California, but the American Southwest.

He is the co-owner and Director of Public Relations for the 2nd most visited mineralogical website online, The-Vug.com.

In 2008, Justin began publishing The-Vug.com Quarterly Magazine, a free, color trade magazine, targeting the international, amateur, mineral collecting public.

This magazine features guides, articles, and stories relating to all aspects of mineral, rock & gem collecting, but primarily focuses on providing scientifically accurate information, written in language that can be understood, even by a novice to the hobby. Now entering its 4th year in publication, The-Vug Quarterly, as it is affectionately known by its readers, distributes over 4,500 hard copies per issue, covering 36 states, 6 countries, and boasts thousands of additional downloads a month via [the free .pdf archive](#). In February of 2011 Justin was named Gallery Coordinator for the Downtown Los Angeles Art Walk.

AOS Calendar for 2013

By Jim Pisani

Below is the tentative AOS Calendar for 2013. We need to fill some of the calendar with interesting speakers, so any suggestion from members would be appreciated.

American Opal Society Calendar	
Date	General Meeting Topic / Speaker
10-Jan-13	Opals of The Americas, Part 2 – Jim Pisani
14-Feb-13	Fluorescent Minerals and Opals - Jim Pisani
14-Mar-13	Michael Greyslock on Gold Detecting
11-Apr-13	Jason Zzyzx on Agates of Southern California
09-May-13	To be announced
13-Jun-13	Live Opal Auction
11-Jul-13	Opal Cutting Seminar
08-Aug-13	Member Show & Tell
12-Sep-13	To be announced
10-Oct-13	Opal & Gem Show Work Session
03-Nov-13	46th Annual Opal & Gem Show
04-Nov-13	46th Annual Opal & Gem Show
14-Nov-13	Opal & Gem Show Recap
12-Dec-13	AOS Christmas Party Potluck

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Setting Opals in a Closed Back Setting? The Ganoksin Project

Janice Mobley Tuesday, February 05, 2013

Please forgive a newbie question, but why is an opal never to be set in a closed back setting? And, can anyone suggest a good resource to begin learning about identifying varieties of opal, cutting opal and setting opal? I have recently acquired some opal rough through an estate sale. Some of it is in water, some is not. I have been afraid to do anything with it for fear of ruining it. A couple of pieces have been roughed out to very thin flat shapes. The man whose estate I purchased it from did intarsia. I knew him and would like to honor him by completing these as he shaped them.
Janice

Charles Anderson Wednesday, February 06, 2013

Hi Janice,
First time I've heard that. I'd be interested in hearing a reason why it's not a good idea, because I've done both. Mind you I use solid opals. As to learning about opals here you go:
<http://www.ganoksin.com/gnkurl/ep800d>
If you are worried about ruining your opals, get them professionally cut.
Regards Charles A.

Richard Hart Wednesday, February 06, 2013

> Please forgive a newbie question, but why is an opal never to be > set in a closed back setting?

There are going to be different opinions on this as usual. Open back with crystal opal will allow color of the background, skin or clothing to show in the opal. Closed back will allow metal behind it to reflect into the opal, yellow gold can make the opal take on an unattractive yellow tint, white metal can wash out the color..

A common practice is to use a black background behind opals that transmit light.

The black background intensifies the play of color. Put an opal on a black background and see how it looks, put it on yellow or white metal and see how it looks.

I have shown customers how an opal looks on their choice of metal, and on a black background, black background has been chosen every time.

What brings out the beauty is more important than a concept. I had the most incredible opal I ever had, it was a crystal based opal, a doublet with a black onyx base. There was a blue and green neon play of color that that looked like it was floating within the opal and it was spectacular. The play of color would not have shown up without the backing.

Sold to a gentleman who owned an art gallery, it was set in a heavy 18kt gold ring.

The ring did have an open back.....

Richard Hart G. G., Denver, Co.

Vernon Thursday, February 07, 2013

The problem with opals in a closed back is that they are a soft stone and the backs are never perfectly flat, so when someone hits them the high spots hit the back and the stone breaks. That said I have mounted many in closed backs. Trick is to take some mineral oil and rub it on the back thin put a layer of epoxy in the setting set the stone in place and wait for the epoxy to set up then finish setting the opal. As far as I know none of the one's I have set have broken in the 40 years I have been doing it. The epoxy form fits to the back of the stone and gives it a very solid support system. The oil prevents the epoxy from sticking to the opal just in case you ever need to remove it for repairs later in life.

J Walker Friday, February 08, 2013

Claiming no expert knowledge and experience limited to Australian opal - but was given the following guidelines:

If it is high quality solid opal - don't back. At the very least, this allows the client to SEE they've got a solid and not a doublet or triplet, both of which are already on a backing. On the other hand, opal for use in intarsia may not be top quality, and if it's already very thin, you may have reason for putting on at least a partial backing.

I've never seen boulder opal without its backing matrix, which is very beautiful in its own right. By its nature, it seems boulder opal is usually freeform, which can make building the setting a PITA - sometimes I remove a little of the backing matrix using a wet diamond file to enable a perfect fit. This is easy to do and does not affect the opal surface at all.

You don't say where you are in the world, but if there is a lapidary club in your region, that's not a bad place to start, and there are some informative websites, though sometimes difficult to get to through the maze of anxious to sell you stuff sites!
Good luck anyway, I do love opal - Aussie boulder opal in particular.

Richard Hopkins Friday, February 08, 2013

Hi
If an opal is bezel set in a solid back setting, you can't tell if it is a solid (high value), doublet (much lower value) or without a loupe triplet (crap).
Richard

Welti, Todd Friday, February 08, 2013

Janice, I learned a lot about opals from Paul Downing's books. He does talk about the different kinds, cutting, valuation, and a bit about setting. I'm not too sure you can tell just by looking at it exactly what kind it is. You can easily tell boulder opal from crystal for example, but it's harder for a beginner to tell crystal from jelly, contra luz etc. If you just want to cut it, and it looks like high quality material (strong fire, not full of cracks, etc.) why not get some beginner material to practice on before tackling it?

Todd Welti Living Color Opals and Intarsia livingcoloropals.com

Linda Zepik Friday, February 08, 2013

I have also heard this before, and wondered if it is true or not. If it is true, does it also apply to triples or doublets that are backed?
Linda

Charles Anderson Friday, February 08, 2013

> I've never seen boulder opal without its backing matrix, which is > very beautiful in its own right.

Having a free form opal may not be as big a problem as you would think. If you buy boulder opal pairs you can have symmetry, as the pairs are mirror opposites in shape ;-)
Regards Charles A.

Charles Anderson Friday, February 08, 2013

If you use a boulder opal it will have ironstone on the back, and still look very pretty, and of course the more colour the more you have to pay ;-) CIA

Charles Anderson Friday, February 08, 2013

> if an opal is bezel set in a solid back setting, you can't tell if > it is a solid (high value),
Richard Sometimes the design precludes viewing the back of the stone anyway :(CIA

Richard Hopkins Friday, February 08, 2013

Invite a Friend - <http://www.ganoksin.com/invite.htm>

Hi

I need to clarify this point.

If the customer sees the opal unset then it is not a problem setting it the way they want closed or open back.

However if selling a piece that the customer has not seen the opal out of the setting that is a totally different matter.

To repeat myself how does one know if the opal is a solid or a doublet when the back is closed?

The value difference between a solid and a doublet can be many thousands of dollars.

Black backing on opals (doublets) to enhance the colour is common practice, to try and make them look like the best quality. However soaked in water they de-laminate and look crap.

Quality AUSTRALIAN OPALS are always solids. Black being the rarest and most magnificent.

Do I only use solids? I wish I was that rich! But when I use a doublet I tell the customer NOT to get it wet.

To me that is like saying don't drink and drive.

The point I am trying to make is be honest with your client. I have found they appreciate explanations of what is what.

I rarely use triplets, and tell the customer they are 1% the price if they were solids.

Also to start a controversy, the best opals are not sold on the open market, they are kept by the miners' for their old age. And sold to private buyers.

Richard

Noel Yovovich Friday, February 08, 2013

Opals can "never" be set in a closed setting? As I am fond of telling my students in all kinds of situations, "There are no jewelry police who'll come and tell you you can't."

Noel

Todd Goodwin Friday, February 08, 2013

I rarely set opals anymore because I have come to hate them. Fire opal, and kiddies, I do not mean Precious Opal (oh lord how I wish the nomenclature would be adhered to properly) is an exception and will always be set open backed, but I have never had an opal break in a closed back. The only thought I give to opals is all I give to any bezel setting, which is "opaque is closed, translucent is open". I would rather never use any glue mixture in my work ever. But yet again, I am a starving die-hard with altruistic tendencies. And as to doublets vs. triplets, toss them both out or better yet, just smash them with a carpenters hammer.

TL Goodwin thepacificimage.com

Charles Anderson Saturday, February 09, 2013

Hi Richard,

> Do I only use solids? I wish I was that rich! Also to start a > controversy, the best opals are not sold on the open market, they > are kept by the miners' for their old age. And sold to private > buyers.

I like to pay up front when I buy opals, but dealers may let you buy the opal and get payment later, or return the opal, like diamonds. I had an argument with a dealer that insisted that I didn't pay until I had viewed the opal, which she posted to me.

I've never heard that about opal miners, but I'd believe it.

Regards Charles A.

Richard Hopkins Sunday, February 10, 2013

Hi

Orchid at its best. I did not realise there were so many quality opinions on opals.

These stones are a real mystery. Honesty with the customer is the main point I was trying to make. We all learn from the various postings. Let us not forget that jewellery is an emotional purchase.

As I say repeatedly "if the customer is enraptured with the piece you made, you have fulfilled your job as a jeweler."

Today I sold a ring order with an amazonite stone, to a regular customer she was ecstatic it was just what she wanted. Expensive no. Design tradition bezel set. Customer happy, beyond belief. Job well done.

Will they come back? YES. We don't have to make "DIAMONDS AND PEARLS".

We just have to make what the ladies want.

Richard

Joy Monday, February 11, 2013

As for opals, I never heard of the open back argument. In fact, most of the jewelry I've seen in New England is the closed-back variety, and I typically do a close back bezel setting. The last repair I did for an opal in gold ring, I had to extract broken opal from ring, re-cab it into 2 pieces, set the 2 opals into a pendant, and then make a new bezel for the ring. I had to re-cab a larger, irregular oval opal doublet into a slightly smaller, egg-shape oval and set that into the ring. I found there was a piece of patined silver sheet in the original setting, to make the broken opal more "blue". That ring is on its 3rd opal, and the owner doesn't care that opals are delicate. It has to be a blue opal, whether it is a nice natural blue opal or a doublet. I'm not going to argue with the owner.

I remembered a thin Koroit opal that I had to use epoxy on the back for extra reinforcement, and another one that cracked in its open-backed setting. If it was a close-back setting, I think the opal wouldn't have cracked. To me, opals are delicate, and require as much support as possible. Open back bezels to me seem an invitation to allow the opal to crack more easy. Anyways, that's my feeling. Whether you guys on Ganoksin feel open back is the way to go, go for it. I feel if a stone needs support, I will epoxy the back of stone and do a close back bezel to be double-sure. As a result, I rarely use opals now. I try to steer clear of soft gems.

Another tip - if I have to set a translucent or transparent stone in a close back bezel, I will use clear chalking in the setting to waterproof the bezel, so the stone never gets wet or dirty underneath. After having to make new bezels for clients who had jewelry that had gotten dirty underneath them, in bezels, I thought clear chalking would help. It's been years since I fixed the jewelry and not a peep from my clients, so I know clear chalking works. Clear silicone glue works well, and clear epoxy. I set Czech glass buttons into close back bezel rings, and use epoxy to provide support for the glass.

If I am cabbing stones with lots of cracks, I will spread superglue into the cracks to help hold the stones together. I use superglue to glue the stones onto nails and then cab them. That is a tip from Michael Boyd, a very creative lapidarist/jeweler.

Joy

Janice Mobley Wednesday, February 13, 2013

Yes, the mystery surrounding opals is great, but because of the discussion stirred up by question, a little of it has been cleared up for me. I continue admiring my opal rough and am beginning to see the difference between my "learner" stones and the ones I shouldn't touch just yet. Thank you to everyone who replied.

Janice

Richard Hopkins Wednesday, February 13, 2013

Hi Joy et al

That is New England America not New England Australia is it not? This would explain a lot.

How can you tell the size of a stone if the back is closed? With opals how can you tell if the stone is solid, doublet or triplet. The value difference between a solid opal and a triplet can be thousands of dollars.

Richard

Charles Anderson Thursday, February 14, 2013

Hi Richard,

With a boulder opal the face of the opal is the nice side, and it's true that you can't tell if a stone is solid or not.

In Australia, if you sell something as a solid opal, it better be one, the maker runs the risk of prosecution if he sells something that isn't as advertised.

This is where reputation and trust comes into play. With the opal design I submitted to the competition, there is no way to inspect the back of the opals, basically they are back to back. The opals have a lot of depth, so when someone who knows what to look for inspects them they will know their value. To anyone without the experience to tell, they are little more than an expensive pretty rock. The value of a solid opal is really worth the money IMO, you can get lost in stones when you appreciate them. Kindest regards Charles A.

Joy Friday, February 15, 2013
Richard

New England is some of the earliest states to formally incorporate themselves as states, and the geography was similar to England, so our early American settlers called themselves New Englanders, to difference from old England. Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut all make up New England.

Since I'm a native New Hampshirer, and born, bred and trained in NH, MA and RI, I'm your classic New Englander. Just a figure of speech. America may be one big country, but oh boy, you have some pretty radical regional characteristics, speech patterns, slang, attitude and much more. I tend to cringe when New Yorkers and New Jesery'ers speak, for they draw out the R and we NHers, Mainers and some of Mass'ers tend to eliminate the R. As a result, we have a more clipped speech when talking.

Bostoners have their own twang so you can hear a metro area Bostoner speak from a mile away. Rhode Island also has their own regional twang, and I still pronounce a few words the RI way, while the rest of my speech and attitudes are NH and the older classic New England (mind your own business, and don't talk so much! the right to bear arms, "leave me alone", being thrifty, are some of them). I find I don't like small talk, and get impatient when people dawdle. We can also be extremely cheap, taking being self-sufficient to a fine art, and can pitch pennies so much, they squeak in protest. My grandfather was one of those frugal Yankees, and really defined being a NH'er. I apparently inherited a lot of his attitudes. and his tinkering skills. He could fix just about anything.

However, we New Englanders have a very dry wit, and a quirky attitude, and completely obsessed with weather. Thought you would enjoy a little New England humor. If you ever read Yankee magazine, you'll get some of the tongue in cheek humor.

Joy, who is still weary from the 2 feet of snow, and we are supposed to get more snow on Sat. Snow blower and shovel and I are pretty much married by now.

From <http://www.ganoksin.com/orchid/archive/201302/msg00170.htm>

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Are we sure it's not green kryptonite? The Editor.

Green Meteorite May be From Mercury, a First

*By Miriam Kramer
March 30, 2013*



This green meteorite that landed in Morocco in 2012 could be from Mercury. (Stefan Ralew/sr-meteorites.de)

Scientists may have discovered the first meteorite from Mercury.

The green rock found in Morocco last year may be the first known visitor from the solar system's innermost planet, according to meteorite scientist Anthony Irving, who unveiled the new findings this month at the 44th annual Lunar and Planetary Science Conference in The Woodlands, Texas. The study suggests that a space rock called NWA 7325 came from Mercury, and not an asteroid or Mars.

NWA 7325 is actually a group of 35 meteorite samples discovered in 2012 in Morocco. They are ancient, with Irving and his team dating the rocks to an age of about 4.56 billion years.

"It might be a sample from Mercury, or it might be a sample from a body smaller than Mercury but [which] is like Mercury," Irving said during his talk. A large impact could have shot NWA 7325 out from Mercury to Earth, he added.

Irving is an Earth and Space Sciences professor at the University of Washington and has been studying meteorites for years. But the NWA 7325 meteorite is unlike anything found on Earth before, he told SPACE.com.

Meteorites from Mars are imbued with some Martian atmosphere, making them somewhat simple to tell apart from other rocks. Space rocks from Vesta, one of the largest asteroids in the solar system, are also chemically distinct, but NWA 7325 does not resemble any space rock documented by scientists today.

Irving thinks that the meteorite was created and eventually ejected from a planet or other body that had flowing magma on its surface at some point in its history. Evidence suggests that the rock could have been formed as "scum" on the top of the magma, Irving said.

NWA 7325 has a lower magnetic intensity — the magnetism passed from a cosmic body's magnetic field into a rock — than any other rock yet found, Irving said. Data sent back from NASA's Messenger spacecraft currently in orbit around Mercury shows that the planet's low magnetism closely resembles that found in NWA 7325, Irving said.

Messenger's observations also provided Irving with further evidence that could support his hypothesis. Scientists familiar with [Mercury's geological and chemical composition](#) think that the planet's surface is very low in iron. The meteorite is also low in iron, suggesting that wherever the rock came from, its parent body resembles Mercury.

While Messenger's first extended mission just finished, the team has put in a request to continue researching the planet with the orbiter for the next two years. If the mission is extended until 2015, the science returned by the spacecraft could help further validate or invalidate Irving's ideas about the origin of the meteorite. Although finding meteorites on Earth that came from Mercury is less likely than finding Martian meteorites, it could be possible, Irving said.

From [Space.com](#) via Foxnews.com

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From Rags to Riches

Chapter 33 – Opal Surprise

By Peter Greisl

Friday morning the sun was shining, even after a nearly sleepless night I felt quite vigorous and full of energy, Johnny was ready to leave for Laszlo to get an exhaust for the compressor organized; I was ready to leave for the shop. As I walked out to the car there was Scotty driving down from the Hospital he saw me and he stopped, I greeted him and asked him 'No work today?' He told me his partner has gone to Adelaide for a couple of weeks and there is no way of him being able to work alone so he decided to have a break. He added 'If you need some help I am available for a couple of weeks,' I replied 'we could do with some help but what would you expect in return?' Scotty replied 'well how about 10% of the take,' I said get changed and go with Johnny, and welcome on board.'

Johnny came out and I said to him, 'Meet your new Partner, Scotty is helping for a couple of weeks while his partner is in Adelaide, he asked 10% of the take in return, effective from a new gouge which does not include the level we left behind yesterday.' Johnny said 'that's fair enough, welcome Scotty.' Well today you have an easy one you just drop off the compressor to Laszlo, and then you go and drop the level and cleanup for the next gauge, when you find out from Laszlo how long this will take come to the shop and let me know.' I said. Scotty replied 'ok, let's get the show on the road.' As we were leaving, the Ranger arrived at Marianne's place. We did not stop we just got into our vehicles and drove off.

I went to the shop and they went to Laszlo's place. It was quite a busy day for me, as people came to get their shopping done for the week end.

Johnny popped its head in and told me that Laszlo will fit a Muffler from a VW he has this would take the least of modification and the compressor would not be deformed etc. as the unit will fit under the chassis and we can pick it up tonight.

Great I replied, and asked Johnny if he has any problems with my decision about Scotty, he replied 'not at all that's great at least we get some work done while you in the shop.'

With that sorted out I concentrated on my job here after Johnny left.

Of course the main topic was the shooting and every one had their own opinion about this, but I stayed neutral.

Closing time came and I went home with my meat allowance and I took some steaks and chops as I decided we have a BBQ which I set up with a few old stones and a piece of iron plate. I did in the past pick up some old pieces of timber which were lying around near old shafts and I took with me pieces from the Village when we reconstructed the room for Johnny so there was wood for a BBQ. I picked up four large bottles of Beer and home I went.

When I arrived Chris was there and put some washing on the line which I set up for her under the eaves of the house. She asked me what I am doing home and I explained to her what I did this morning and also that I will have Scotty here for dinner, we will have a BBQ, if you can knock up a salad etc. that will be great. Chris acknowledged and continued with the washing.

I parked the car and did a quick mental summary of all the Opal stuff we got here to check through. There were three buckets which Johnny has to take tomorrow to Klaus and Ludwig. The three were the linen bag full of chips, then there was the blanket in which we dropped the level from last night.

So there was a lot of work we have to do to sort through all this stuff, plus if there is anything which Johnny and Scotty is working on. So let's hope that we will be rewarded for our last efforts.

I was ready to walk in the house as the Ute appeared. I waited for them to arrive and saw the compressor on the back. I looked closer and I saw the muffler under the chassis with a little spout on a pipe protruding past the frame upwards, it was an excellent job. I asked Johnny if he had heard it running to which he replied, 'absolutely fantastic it just sounds like a VW,' I said, 'start it up I like to hear it.' He did and Chris and Beatrix came out, it sounded great when it was idling you could have a conversation without shouting. I gave signals to Johnny to rev it up, which he did and again a very pleasant sound not this annoying very loud noise from before.

Shut it down I said to Johnny, I will go tomorrow morning and fix him up for everything, I owe him already \$400 plus the modification, actually Scotty you can go with Johnny if you wish tomorrow to White Dam to do some tumbling at Klaus and Ludwig, but you don't have to, normally we work on Saturday but not this time as I have some commitments tomorrow and we are not ready for the gauge,' Scotty replied well I got nothing going on so I might as well go with him.' If you not in a hurry, I am just about to throw some Steaks and Chops on the BBQ, you welcome to join us. Scotty agreed and thanked us for it, so I told him to get the Axe out of the shed and make some kindling. While he was doing this I asked Johnny of any results today since he dropped the level, he told me that there were

again some nice traces and they put all the level material in the two buckets.

So now we have 5 buckets of stuff to be tumbled and sifted.

'You are going to have a busy day tomorrow.' I said. 'I would be very disappointed if we did not finish up with a nice parcel from all the stuff we accumulated.' Johnny replied.

By the way how did Scotty work out I asked him and got a satisfactory reply. "Well that's great, let's hope we can continue to find stuff so he gets something for his efforts," I commented.

Scotty came with the wood and lit the fire in the BBQ and we waited for the heat to accumulate so we can put the meat on.

Chris brought out some Salad and buttered bread and 5 Plates.

The Meat went on and it was cooked in no time. We enjoyed a couple beers and the Steaks and Chops and just Chin Wagged about Opal mining and the luck and hopes and I could see that Scotty is also very taken by this fabulous Gem. The evening was very pleasant and before we parted Johnny told Scotty that he will pick him up at 9am as he is driving past Dutton Village anyhow on the way to White Dam. Scotty acknowledged wished us a good night, got into his car and drove off. We just cleaned up and went inside and Chris is getting Beatrix ready for bed, and we had a coffee and I said to Johnny, "Do you feel energetic enough to look through the linen bag?" He nodded, "Why not it is still very early." I ask him to start the Generator so we can use the grinders etc. We went to the Shed with a large bowl filled with water; I got the bag and joined him. We dumped the stuff from the bag in to the bowl and sloshed it around a few times, emptied the water and repeated the process a few times till we could see the stones etc. in the water. We brought the bowl closer to the light and my eyes just about popped out of my sockets. I could not believe what I saw, several pieces of different sizes of pure clean crystal opal with every conceivable colour, with very little dirt or rock on it. I fished them out one by one and it added up to seven stones which were from 5mm thick and about 25mm by 20mm all about the same sizes. My Blood was racing through my veins and I was so excited by seeing all these beautiful stones, as we sifted through more and more smaller pieces appeared, Johnny was smiling like a cat which caught a mouse, and we put all the larger stones together which have to go over the grinder, and all the chips into another bowl, Johnny said, "we got here at least 3 or 4 ounces of solids. And I am sure another 5 or 6 ounces of doublets and triplet material plus all the small chips." Well let's clean it up and see what we finish up with," I replied. Chris came in brought us a few of the Epsom jars where we going to put the opal in as usually.

We shared the grinding and cleaning process and we worked continuously with coffee support till we finished by 12:45am. We took everything inside and I went and got the scale and we started to weigh the material.

By the time we finished we had 3.5 ounces of top class solids material, 1.25 ounces of doublets, 2 ounces of chips, and a couple of beautiful small painted ladies. I said to Johnny, "We still have 5 buckets of stuff to go through plus the stuff in the blanket, now it is getting real exciting."

He replied by saying, "We really could be on to something here who knows what's in the rest of all the material." I am so fired up that I just like to continue to check the blanket and the buckets, but I know it is not advisable." We will get through all the stuff on Sunday after you tumbled and sifted it at Klaus place.

Chris was just sitting there mesmerized and turning the jars over and over and over and staring at the great colours in them. She said, "Boys can you imagine finding a piece of opal in one piece of all these solids put together."

"Well my dear, some people did and still doing it, and I hope we will be part of these people, I would feel really sad and sorry of selling such a beautiful piece of mother nature's creation, and having it cut up so many people can cage it in some piece of Jewellery." I believe such a nice big piece should be preserved and put on show somewhere where the rest of the world have the

opportunity of seeing Natures Creation and enjoying it. "I continued my melancholic speech. Johnny replied, "Yes it is a shame but this is the way we are, let's face it we are not Archeologist and work for the museum, we are opal miners the same as gold miners, and we go out take chances and live a life in very strenuous conditions in the hope that we can make a better life for our families and our self." "I understand all this and this is the reason why I am here, but it still saddens me the way we destroy nature's way and once these beautiful stones are taken from the ground they do not come back anymore and we keep looking in new places to see if we can rob more and more. It is not like flowers, when you see nice flowers you go and cut them and take them home and enjoy them and you replace them with new ones as they are growing back, but these stones once taken from the earth, that's it gone forever."

Chris said, "Darling I never knew you feel this way, you never expressed or told me of this feeling to me." I know, it is just that I never ever seen such beautiful parts of nature, I got no feeling towards Diamonds, that's why I never bought you a diamond ring." But yes, I will keep a couple of stones before we leave the fields out which I will have made a ring and pendant for you so I can always when I feel like it look at them." Johnny finished his coffee and said, "I am off to bed see you guy's in the morning." "Good Night Johnny we said, well done mate I added, looks like we will have a few dollars again." He smiled and replied, "Let's fill our coffers with Great Tidings," Chris replied, "Now he is going flaming poetic." I laughed and said, "See you in the morning."

Once Johnny was gone Chris asked me, "Darling are you ok, I never seen you like this, so melancholic." I replied, "I am scared of being disappointed, that all these little findings we have are to tantalize me, and maybe we finish off with nothing after all the hard work we have put in and money I spent, and you and Beatrix have to live in these conditions." Chris answered,

"Darling I love you and all the way behind and support you, you always made the right decisions in our life together, Why don't we put all the money away we can to save up enough so we can leave the field if we have to and can start in Adelaide or even go back to Sydney, but I am sure you will find more Opal than that." "Yes dear as long as we don't run out of ground." I retorted.

"I am convinced that you will make the necessary adjustments and decisions with your mining so you don't run out of ground, you also told me that there is still the possibility that there is some opal there in a main pillar, which you could uncover when you put a cut in." Chris replied.

"I love you Darling, you are the greatest, let's go to bed." I said to her.

The next morning, everyone was ready for action, I was going with Chris to the co-op and while she is shopping I go to Laszlo to do some wheeling and dealing, I have my Stone with me which I use part of the payment.

Johnny asked me to help him to take off the compressor and put all the buckets on which he will take to Klaus with him that done he left to pick up Scotty. And I packed Beatrix and Chris in the Car and we headed for the co-op where I dropped off Chris and Beatrix. I went to Laszlo and he was already outside in his workshop and greeted me with a smiling face.

I got out the car and we exchanged some nice words and I asked him how much I owe him for everything, which were the compressor and all the other gear plus the muffler modification.

Laszlo said "well the Compressor I told you \$350 I don't charge you for the Lights, the modification I think that \$50 should cover it." I was happy with everything and I reminded him of doing a deal which he remembered. I pulled out the stone and he took it and turned it around and just smiled and said, "My Wife would like to have an exceptional ring and this stone would be perfect," He shouted, "Darling come out I like to show you something." To which she appeared and greeted me very friendly which I returned the greeting, and he handed her the stone which she twisted and turned and just said "is it for sale," I replied yes it is I want to make a deal

with your husband." She looked at him and blurted out, "I want it." Laszlo asked me how much I want for it. I said, "Well I give you the stone and a \$100.00 and we are even." He replied, "if you make it \$125.00 we have a deal." Swiftly I replied, "Done." I reached for my wallet pulled out \$125.00 and handed it to him and the stone and said, "it is always a pleasure doing business with an honest person." Laszlo said, Peter any time you need help with something don't hesitate to call on me, and good luck with your Claim. We shook hands I said good bye to his wife and him and went to the co-op to pick up Chris and her shopping.

We went home and were getting ready to meet with Doug Johnson.

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Dowsing for Minerals?

We Test the New "Min-Dowzer"

By Russell Stevens

An article in the *Nevada Mining News* recently announced that a group of scientists and graduate students from Ball State University had developed a mineral dowsing device capable of detecting mineral deposits and crystals. The device works on proprietary microwave technology developed by the team from Ball State.

The "Min-Dowzer" consists of two parts: #1—two "wands," held in the hands, with their accompanying power supply, worn on a belt around the waist, and #2—a device that mills small amounts of a mineral into a powder and places the powder in small capsules to be inserted into the wands.

Here's how it works. Let's say we're looking for quartz crystals. First, a small quartz crystal is placed in the milling device. The crystal is pulverized and enclosed in two capsules that are provided. The capsules are placed into the two "wands." The wands pass a microwave signal through the powder, producing a unique microwave signature for that mineral. This unique signal is amplified and broadcast toward the ground in front of the wands, which are held in the hands of the operator. When a quartz crystal is located, the wands make a beeping sound and point in the direction of the located crystal. Follow the wands in the direction they indicate until the wands point in toward each other, indicating that the mineral is directly below the wands. A gauge on one of the wands shows the depth below the surface, in inches, of the crystal. All that's left to do is grab a shovel and carefully dig up the crystal!

The "Min-Dowzer" sounded interesting, so I called the university to get a little more information. I spoke with a group representative named Henry "Hash" Browne, who said that they were interested in doing some field testing of an updated version of the "Min-Dowser." I immediately invited Mr. Browne to come to Colorado, and we could try out the device on one of the topaz claims that my partner, Jon Pinball, and I have in the Tarryall Mountains. Hash (Mr. Browne insists on being called "Hash") agreed, and we set up a date in late August of last year.

On August 25th, Hash flew into Denver, rented a car, and met Jon and I at the Fossil Inn in Florissant. After a breakfast of hash browns, we each drove to Lake George and up the Tarryall Road to near one of our claims. We unloaded our collecting gear and helped Hash load his equipment into a backpack for the short hike to the claim.

We decided to use the milling device there at Hash's car, so he wouldn't have to carry it in with him. Jon produced a couple small topaz crystals from his back pocket, and Hash picked one of them. Jon put the other back in his pocket. Hash dropped the crystal into the milling device, and in a few seconds, it produced two capsules with powdered topaz inside. These capsules can be kept and re-used indefinitely. He placed one capsule in each wand and stowed the wands in his pack. As we walked up the trail to the claim, Hash told us stories of his mining days working in Nevada, California, and Namibia, Africa.

We walked to the area we planned to search, and Hash got out his gear. He put on the power supply belt, hooked it up to the wands and turned them on. It took about 15 seconds for the wands to analyze the mineral in the capsules, and Hash was ready to go. Holding a wand in each hand, Hash began to search an area by walking back and forth in a grid pattern. It wasn't long before the wands started beeping and both began pointing in one direction. Hash followed until the wands pointed in toward each other, indicating the mineral was directly beneath them and nine inches below the surface. Jon and I carefully dug down about nine inches, and sure enough, there was a single topaz crystal, about an inch across.

The topaz was loose in the soil, and must have eroded out of a pocket uphill. Hash continued looking uphill, finding topaz after topaz, along with some quartz and feldspar crystals we found while digging up the topaz crystals. About twenty feet above the original topaz discovery, we uncovered the pocket from which the crystals had eroded.

Needless to say, Jon and I were amazed. Jon and I were eager to try the device ourselves, and Hash helped me put the gear on. We decided to walk over to an area that had been unproductive for us in the past. With Jon leading the way, I turned on the wands and followed. I hadn't taken three steps when the wands indicated a target slightly off to my right near where Jon was walking. I told Jon to keep walking the direction he was going, as the wands were pointing that way.

We slowly walked in that direction for probably a full minute, and I was amazed at the distance from which the device could pick up a target. Suddenly Jon let out a series of unprintable expletives, and started hopping around slapping at the back of his pants which seemed to be smoking a little bit, and yelling for me to "turn off the #%&! machine." Being unfamiliar with the device, it took a few seconds to turn it off.

By that time, Jon had his now-really smoking pants down around his knees, and Hash and I were laughing uncontrollably. I poured some water from my water bottle into his pocket and removed that other small topaz crystal that we hadn't used earlier. I also noticed a charred spot on his BVD's with a little pink showing through. I later heard from Jon's wife that he'd been branded by the topaz crystal and the scar clearly showed the crystal's termination faces. Hash said that he had never had anything like that happen before, but that a colleague had discovered that if you dropped a small crystal into a pan of water and turned on the "Min-Dowser," you could poach an egg in less than a minute!

In deference to Jon's ordeal, I gave him the "Min-Dowser," and he used it the rest of the afternoon. We found 22 other single crystals, and three small pockets before we finally packed up for the day! As you might guess, we were impressed. Jon and I found crystals we would never have found without the help of this machine! We walked back to the cars and took off our packs. I asked Hash how much the "Min-Dowser" cost and where we could buy one.

He told me that a St. Louis company had been licensed to produce the device, and that it would be on the market in about six months. The price had not yet been set, but he thought it would be in the \$3,000 range. A bargain, if you ask me! I had Hash put us down on the list for one of the first ones available.

Before we left, I asked Hash if he was working on anything new. He replied that they were working on developing actual "Xray" glasses for the Dept. of Homeland Security. The X-ray technology was developed by department head Prof. Seymore Kleevage. Prof. Kleevage is also the person to contact at Ball State University for any questions about the "Min-Dowser."

That wraps up this review, except to say that this machine more than lives up to its name! For more info on the "Min-Dowser" use the link below: seymorekleevage@BSuniversity.org. Editor's Note: If you are excited about the potential that the above article details, I recommend you reevaluate the article. It is April, after all.

From Pick & Pan 2006-4

<http://www.csms.us/pickandpack/pickandpak2006/April%202006.pdf>

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April 2013 Gem & Mineral Shows

More shows can be found at <http://www.rockngem.com/show-dates-display/?ShowState=ALL>

6-7—POCATELLO, ID: 56th Annual Rock Show; Southeast ID Gem & Mineral Society; Bannock County Fairgrounds; 10558 Ifft Rd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$2, children (under 12) free with adult; contact Anna Capell, PO Box 3089 West Neeley Loop, American Falls, ID 83211, (208) 221-9458

12-14—EUREKA, CA: Eureka Gem, Jewelry, Bead & Mineral Show; Crafty Cat Events; Redwood Acres Fairgrounds; Harris St.; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$3, seniors and students \$1.50 with ID, children (12 and under) free with adult; contact Johnita Wemken, PO Box 704, Penryn, CA 95663, (916) 212-1647; Web site: www.craftycatevents.com

12-14—HILLSBORO, OR: Wholesale and retail show; Gem Faire Inc.; WA County Fairgrounds; 873 NE 34th Ave.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$7 (3 days), children (11 and under) free; jewelry, gems, beads, crystals, silver, rocks, minerals, more than 70 exhibitors, jewelry repair while you shop; contact Allen Van Volkinburgh, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

12-14—OGDEN, UT: 62nd Gemstone Junction; Golden Spike Gem & Mineral Club; Golden Spike Event Center; Weber County Fair Grounds, 1000 North 1200 West; Fri. 9-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; donations accepted; Mr. Bones, grab bags, Wheel of Fortune, rock painting, sapphire and garnet digs, more than 20 dealers, rocks, minerals, jewelry, beads, faceted stones, lapidary supplies, gold, fossils, more than 60 exhibits, displays, demonstrators; contact Cynthia Aeschlimann, PO Box 12835, Ogden, UT 84414, (801) 648-5060; e-mail: club@goldenspikegem.org; Web site: www.goldenspikegem.org

12-14—VISTA, CA: Annual show; San Diego County Council; Antique Gas and Steam Engine Museum; 2040 N. Santa Fe Ave.; Fri. 9-?; free admission; jewelry, books, slabs, cabs, new and used equipment, rough material, lapidary-related items; contact Ray Pearce, 753 Abbywood Dr., Oceanside, CA 92057, (760) 726-7570; e-mail: raysrocks@cox.net

13-14—HELENA, MT: 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; more than 20 dealers, gems, minerals, fossils, jewelry, beads, equipment dealers, displays, wire wrap demonstrations, fluorescent mineral display, children's ball toss, garnet hunt, grab bags; contact Gary Parisi, PO Box 736, Helena, MT 59624, (406) 442-1226; e-mail: gjparisi72@yahoo.com; Web site: helenamineralsociety.org

13-14—ID FALLS, ID: 48th Annual ID Falls Gem & Mineral Show; ID Falls Gem & Mineral; ID Falls Recreation Center; B St.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$2, children (under 12) free; contact Jim Bosley, (208) 520-1819; e-mail: jbosley@cablone.net

13-14—MARIPOSA, CA: Annual show; Mariposa Gem & Mineral Club; Mariposa County Fairgrounds; 5007 Fairgrounds Rd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; free admission; guest speakers, dealers, silent auctions, raffle; contact Nikki West, 4166 Sullivan Rd., Mariposa, CA 95338, (209) 742-4234; e-mail: nwest2006@yahoo.com

13-14—PARADISE, CA: Annual show; Paradise Gem & Mineral; Elks Lodge; 6309 Clark Rd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; adults \$2, seniors (65+) \$1, children (16 and under) free; Jade of Northern CA; contact Manuel Garcia, 5659 Foster Rd., Paradise, CA 95969, (530) 877-7324; e-mail: mmpg@att.net; Web site: paradisegem.org

19-21—DENVER, CO: Wholesale and retail show; Martin Zinn Expositions LLC; Ramada Plaza Denver Central; 4849 Bannock St.; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-6; free admission; 70 local and regional dealers, minerals, fossils, meteorites, gems, jewelry, beads, lapidary supplies, metaphysical supplies, decorator items; contact Regina Aumente, PO Box 665, Bernalillo, NM 87004, (505) 867-0425; e-mail: mzexpos@gmail.com; Web site: www.mzexpos.com

19-21—RICKREALL, OR: Annual show; Willamette Agate & Mineral Society; Polk County Fairgrounds; 520 S. Pacific Hwy. W; Fri. 9-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4:30; adults \$2, children (under 12) free; contact Etheleen Flippo, (503) 623-4247; e-mail: reflippoo@hotmail.com

19-21—SAN DIEGO, CA: Wholesale and retail show; Gem Faire Inc.; Scottish Rite Center; 1895 Camino del Rio S; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$7 (3 days), children (11 and under) free; jewelry, gems, beads, crystals, silver, rocks, minerals, more than 70 exhibitors, jewelry repair while you shop; contact Allen Van Volkinburgh, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

20-21—NEWBURY PARK, CA: Annual show; Conejo Gem & Mineral Club; Borchard Park Community Center; 190 Reino Rd., at Borchard Rd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission; exhibits, sales, gems, jewelry, rocks, minerals, fossils, youth activities, lapidary and jewelry making demonstrations, silent auction, door prizes; contact Robert Sankovich, 1961 Havenwood Dr., Thousand Oaks, CA 91362, (805) 494-7734; e-mail: rmsorca@adelphia.net; Web site: www.cgamc.org

20-21—SAN JOSE, CA: Annual show; Santa Clara Valley Gem & Mineral Society; Santa Clara County Fairgrounds; 344 Tully Rd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$6 (discount coupon on web site), children (under 12) free; dealers, kids' educational area, Scout badge programs, demonstrations, flint knapper, gold panning, guest speakers, door prizes, personal displays; contact Frank Mullaney, 5705 Begonia Dr., San Jose, CA 95124-3565, (408) 265-1422; e-mail: info@scvgms.org; Web site: www.scvgms.org

20-21—WALNUT CREEK, CA: Retail show; Pacific Crystal Guild; Civic Park Community Center; 1375 Civic Dr.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; adults \$6, children (under 12) free; 30 dealers, minerals, gems, crystals, beads, metaphysical healing tools; contact Jerry Tomlinson, PO Box 1371, Sausalito, CA 94966, (415) 383-7837; e-mail: jerry@crystalfair.com; Web site: www.crystalfair.com

26-28—GRANTS PASS, OR: Annual show; Rogue Gem & Geology Club; Josephine County Fairgrounds; 1451 Fairgrounds Rd.; Fri. 9-5, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; adults \$1, children (11 and under) free; dealers, silent auction, door prizes, displays, demonstrations, raffle prizes, kids' games; contact Mary Blankenship, PO Box 1224, Grants Pass, OR 97528, (541) 862-2989; e-mail: rockhoundclub@yahoo.com; Web site: www.roguegemandgeology.com

26-28—SANTA ROSA, CA: Wholesale and retail show; Gem Faire Inc.; Sonoma County Fairgrounds; 1350 Bennett Valley Rd.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6,

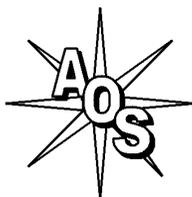
Sun. 10-5; adults \$7 (3 days), children (11 and under) free; jewelry, gems, beads, crystals, silver, rocks, minerals, more than 70 exhibitors, jewelry repair while you shop; contact Allen Van Volkinburgh, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

26-29—WICHITA, KS: Show and sale; Wichita Gem & Mineral Society; Cessna Activity Center; 2744 George WA Blvd.; Fri. 9-7, Sat. 10-7, Sun. 10-5; adults \$5, students \$1, children free; contact Gene Maggard, (316) 742-3746; e-mail: gandpmaggard@wildblue.net

27-28—ELMA, WA: Annual show; Grays Harbor Geology & Gem Society; Grays Harbor County Fair Grounds; 43 Elma-McCleary Rd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; free admission; Grays Harbor Gem & Geology Earth Treasures; contact Gary Emberley, (360) 533-6196; e-mail: melissa624@hotmail.com

27-28—FRANKLIN, NJ: 42nd annual show; NJ Earth Science Assn., Sterling Hill Mining Museum, Franklin-Ogdensburg Mineralogical Society; WA School; 50 WA Ave.; Sat. 9-5:30, Sun. 10-5; adults \$4; outdoor swap, auction, indoor mineral dealers, fluorescent minerals, gems, meteorites, fossils, daylight and fluorescent exhibits; contact Russell Brarens, 515 Lincoln Blvd., Middlesex, NJ 08846-2442, (732) 469-1047; e-mail: RNB515@aol.com

27-28—SANTA CRUZ, CA: Annual show; Santa Cruz Mineral & Gem Society; Civic Center Auditorium; Center St. and Church St.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$4 (\$1 off coupon on Web site), children (12 and under) free; minerals, jewelry, jade, crystals, rocks, kids' activities, fluorescent mineral display; contact Julia Cornblatt, (831) 687-0509; e-mail: scruzmgms@gmail.com; Web site: www.scgms.org



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The Opal Express

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**Volume #46 Issue #4
April 2013**

Some Topics In This Issue:

- Setting Opals in a Closed Back Setting?
- Green Meteorite May be From Mercury
- From Rags to Riches – Ch. 33 Opal Surprise
- Dowsing for Minerals?

TO:

Important Dates:

- April 7 – Board Meeting:
- April 11 - General Meeting:
Justin Zzyzx on Agates of California

— GENERAL MEETINGS —

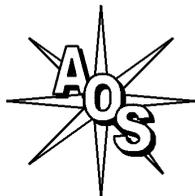
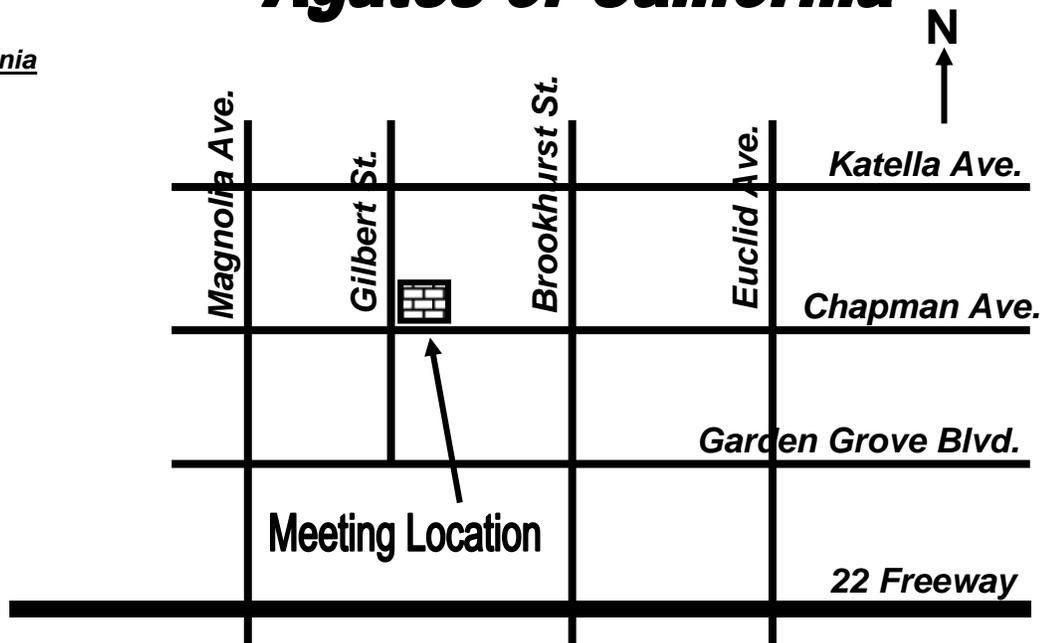
2nd Thurs. of the Month
7:00 pm - 9:00 PM

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

April 11 Justin Zzyzx on Agates of California



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