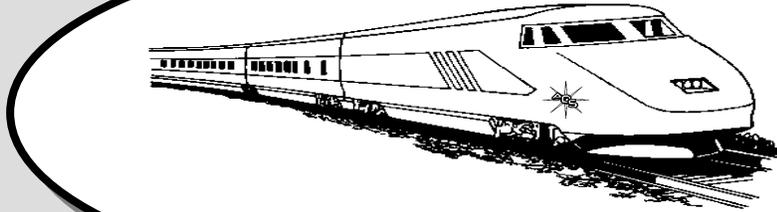


# The Opal Express

Published monthly by  
The  
American  
Opal  
Society



October 2013

Volume 46 Issue 10

## Table of Contents

<i>Dr Brandon Browne, CSUF, Mammoth Volcano</i>	1
<i>Members Only Website Password</i>	1
<i>AOS Calendar for 2013</i>	1
<i>Outback Opals</i>	2
<i>From Rags to Riches: Ch 39 – Trapped at Boundary Rider</i>	4
<i>Rare gold coin from 1880 sells for \$2.75M at auction</i>	5
<i>Gem's Value Sank Like a Rock</i>	6
<i>The Art of Opal Cutting</i>	6
<i>October 2013 Gem &amp; Mineral Shows</i>	7

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Women's Club, located at 9501 Chapman Ave., Garden Grove, CA 92841, starting at 7:30pm.

It was a series of geologic eruptions more than 100,000 years ago that led to the formation of the still active Mammoth volcano, which lies at the southern end of a string of volcanoes.

The guest speaker will be Dr. Brandon Browne, associate professor of geological sciences at California State University, Fullerton.

Browne will present an overview of the geologic evolution of the Mammoth volcano and how it relates to other volcanic features in the region, like the Devil's Postpile, the Long Valley Caldera, and the Mono-Inyo volcanic chain. He will also discuss some new research study results of the mountain by CSUF students.

Browne holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Oregon State University, as well as a master degree in geology and a doctorate from the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

His research interests include volcanology and igneous petrology, and his current projects focus on volcanoes in Alaska and in the southern and eastern Sierra Nevada in California.

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## Members Only Website Password

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

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## AOS Calendar for 2013

Below is the AOS Calendar for 2013.

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 Greyshock on Gold Detecting
11-Apr-13	Dr. Walt Johnson on Jewelry Making
09-May-13	Video on Opal Mining in Brazil
13-Jun-13	Live Opal Auction
11-Jul-13	Opal Show Working Meeting
08-Aug-13	Jason Zzyzx on Agates of Southern California
12-Sep-13	Jim Bowden, Introduction to Flint Knapping
10-Oct-13	<b>Dr Brandon Browne, CSUF, Mammoth Volcano</b>
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

## It's Coming! The American Opal Society's 46<sup>th</sup> Annual **OPAL & GEM SHOW**

*The Largest Opal Show in USA!*

**Sat. Nov. 2, 2013 - 10AM - 6PM**

**Sun. Nov. 3, 2013 - 10 AM - 5PM**

**Opal and Gem Dealers** from the USA and Australia.  
**Rough and Cut Opals;** gemstones; jewelry & supplies.  
**Huge Raffle** many prizes of gemstones, jewelry, tools, etc.  
**Free Opal Seminars** on Saturday with Paid Admission.  
**Free Demonstrations** on gem cutting, jewelry making, etc.

### New location!

**The Phoenix Club - Festhalle**

1340 S. Sanderson Ave., Anaheim, CA 92806

## **Dealer spots are still available!**

**If you are interested, contact us ASAP!**

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(714) 815-4638, [editor@opalsociety.org](mailto:editor@opalsociety.org)

## **October Speaker**

### **Dr Brandon Browne, CSUF, Mammoth Volcano**

On Thursday, October 10, the Mammoth Mountain volcano will be the focus of the General Meeting Lecture at the Garden Grove Civic



Northern Regional Development \$1 million opal hat image courtesy Board Australian Opal Exhibition

## Outback Opals

By Carla Caruso, August 16, 2009

Long seen as just a tourist gem, Australia's national gemstone is shaking off past stigmas to be embraced by a new generation. CARLA CARUSO reports.

From dusty, remote parts of Australia comes the opal, Australia's national gemstone. The multi-coloured gem is an icon of the outback. Indeed, 95 per cent of the world's opal is produced here.

Opal fields lie in Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia, with black opal found in the New South Wales town of Lightning Ridge, Boulder opal in Queensland and white opal mainly from South Australia.

Federal Government agency Austrade estimates current Australian production figures for uncut opals between \$100 million and \$200 million.

Yet, while the US, Japan and much of Europe enjoys the stone, few Australians would have opal designs in their jewellery boxes.

Lightning Ridge opal expert, gemmologist and valuer Michelle Schellnegger says past stigmas have been hard to shake, but it is slowly happening: "There used to be a lot of discount, souvenir-style tourist stores with opal, which may have tended to cheapen it in some people's mind. But, today's retail outlets are offering more variety and quality opal jewellery. There are still the classic and conservative styles of opal jewellery available, but we are seeing more contemporary designs as well."

The small-scale nature of the industry also means things have been slow-moving, according to Maxine O'Brien, the coordinator of the trade-only Australian Opal Exhibition, and the secretary-manager of the Lightning Ridge Miners Association. "As far as the Australian domestic market goes, we're a fairly small industry," O'Brien says. "There's not a lot of promotion for the end consumer."

Plus, Australia's opal industry is struggling to keep pace with the resources boom, with opal miners being drawn into more lucrative mining jobs, says Andrew Cody, the company director of opal exporter Cody Opal and president of the International Coloured Gemstone Association (ICA).

There are other challenges, too, he adds: "The opal industry is suffering quite dramatically from the state of the American economy due to the Australian dollar being so high. As well, the value of the Japanese yen has fallen. Tourism is well down and, unfortunately,

it's going to get worse with the rising cost of fuel. Australia is on the worst side of it, because we're further away. It's never been quite this difficult."

Contrary to the doom and gloom, there is light at the end of the tunnel. Challenges have forced the opal industry to look "out of the box", and investigate new types of customers and emerging markets, such as China and Russia.

The ICA has organised its first dedicated coloured gemstone trade fair in October in Dubai, another promising new market.

Innovation in design, such as using sterling silver and inlays - layering fine opal in another metal - for more affordable options, is also helping to attract younger clientele at home.

And, it's working well for Sydney-based Opals Australia, according to national accounts manager Clayton Peer.

"In collaboration with a Sydney based designer, we have developed a sterling silver collection, titled the Phoenix Range," Peer says. "This range is targeted towards consumers who are price-conscious and looking for cutting-edge designs, refined finishes and quality opal at an affordable price. Our silver products are targeted towards younger consumers, aged from 18 to 35 years old."

Opals Australia is also promoting a branded image in the marketplace, using branded stands and signage, so consumers associate with its "OA" label, rather than just with the opals themselves.

"We are currently seeing a positive growth in the Australian domestic market," Peer says. "Our branded range is having great success throughout Australia."

Also emerging is a focus on design. Adelaide boutique jewellery house iOpal uses cutting-edge, one-off designs for its "discerning clients", teaming opal with everything from African fluorite beads to Argyle diamonds.

Schellnegger says she has noticed the change: "Conventionally, most black opal has been cut into an oval shape, with a cabochon, but there has been much more emphasis on freeform or designer pieces. In the last 10 years, there has been an increase in non-conventional shapes."

Such innovation has been on show at the International Opal Design Jewellery Awards, held in Lightning Ridge every two years, of which Schellnegger has been a judge.

Other recent events upping the design factor include the National Opal Miners Association's (NOMA) Opal Fashion Bash in Townsville in April, which saw Miss Universe Australia contestants strutting down the catwalk in opal jewellery, and the Australian Opal Exhibition on the Gold Coast in July, where the gem collided with fashion and art to create the million-dollar opal hat that was on display.

NOMA president Drago Panich puts it simply: "The youth is our future and the greater number of young and dynamic people we can directly expose to our national gemstone, the brighter the future will be for the opal industry."

Sunshine Coast retailer Opals Down Under has also been attracting the young market with its new Slider bead range.

"We have released beads in our new Sliders range, which sees opals shaped into doughnuts, with a silver sleeve inserted through the hole," explains manager and opal cutter Scott Coggan. "This allows the beads to not only be worn as pendants but, depending on the diameter of the hole, also be used on European-style bracelets, such as Pandora, Trollbeads and Chamilia."

Opals Down Under advertising and internet coordinator Rhys Fox says the store has also had a surge in enquiries for opal engagement rings in recent months among young couples.

"I think couples are wanting something different to diamonds and a good amount of these customers are actually having the rings hand-made for a completely one-off approach, which is fantastic," Fox says.

For such a request, strong Queensland Boulder opals are recommended with a bezel or rub-over setting - as opposed to a claw setting - to protect the stone.

Schellnegger says there are other developments in the works, each helping the opal's cause: "Two consecutive Qantas issues recently featured stories on Coober Pedy and Lightning Ridge, plus, the JCK magazine in the US did an opal feature recently; the more that it is out there, the more that people will consider it."

Jewellery Decisions gemmologist and trainer Sarah Gambi, who has worked internationally for names like Cartier, Bulgari and Rolex agrees: "More marketing and more involvement with the big high-fashion firms, such as Tiffany and Co and Cartier, will help to get opal out of the duty-free zone and into the high-market luxury brands."



International Opal Jewellery Design Awards 2007

Though some opal experts argue the "Duty Free" perception of opal jewellery is an exclusively Australian phenomena and that this perception does not exist globally.

"The relative rarity of opal makes it highly sort after in the global market, albeit, still as a niche product," says Ben Morrow, director, Opals Australia.

Cody believes that sometimes Australians need to see something work well overseas before they'll consider it here.

"An interesting example was that we had somebody show us an opal jewellery design in a magazine from New York," he said. "She asked if we could do something like that here. She had to see it in New York to appreciate it."

The opal industry has certainly had its challenges in recent times, from a tourism downturn to the poaching of promising talent by other

industries, yet despite it all, Australia's national gemstone is rising to the task by looking to new markets and clientele, and changing its approach.

With the right amount of foresight and innovation, the outback stone can only shine brighter, abroad and closer to home.

### Discovering opal: some facts and figures

The name opal comes from the Greek word *opallios*, which means to see a change in colour.

When rotated, the gem can show off an ever-changing interplay of fiery colours. Each opal is one-of-a-kind and the different varieties offer a wide range of colours, shapes and sizes for the customer.

Black opals are the rarest and most valuable of the stones. The world's most valuable black opal, the Aurora Australis, was found at New South Wales' Lightning Ridge in 1938 and is valued at \$1 million. It weighs 180 carats and sparkles with red, green and blue against a black backdrop.

Black opal recently became the official gemstone of New South Wales.

Opal is largely made up of a variety of natural silica found in the earth and is mainly mined using open-cut and the traditional shaft and tunnelling method.

There are three major mining areas in Australia, each producing a different variety of the stone: Coober Pedy in South Australia; Lightning Ridge in New South Wales; and central Queensland.

Coober Pedy is home to the white opal, which is sometimes referred to as the milk opal. White opals can be differentiated by their pale white or light body tone. They're much more plentiful and common than any other kind of opal and generally display less vibrant colours. Although, as some of these light opals tend to be more transparent, a brilliant colour play may ensue.

Nearby towns Mintabie and Andamooka also have the gem.

Black opal, recently named the official gemstone of New South Wales by the NSW Government, is found in the town of Lightning Ridge. The stone has an underlying dark background hue, which gives the colour a greater intensity; however, the word "black" doesn't refer to the face of the opal just to its background - and its precious colours come in a rainbow of hues.

Boulder opal is found all over central Queensland, including such areas as Quilpie, Winton and Opalton. It is often found as a thin veneer of opal of vibrant colours naturally covering the surface of the ironstone rock that is unique to Queensland. Sometimes it is found as very colourful pinpoints in a matrix - or the fine-grained portion of rock, where coarser minerals or rock fragments are embedded.

German geologist Johannes Menge made the first Australian opal discovery in 1849 in Angaston, South Australia. Consequently, the Queensland Boulder Opal and Lightning Ridge fields attracted many miners during the 1880s. Opal production later became a commercially viable industry. Production began at White Cliffs, NSW in 1890, from Opalton, Queensland, in 1896, and at Lightning Ridge, NSW in 1905.

Many written accounts of early opal discoveries suggest that most were accidental - an opal-bearing rock, kicked-up by a galloping horse, a shimmering stone, swishing around in a shallow creek.

When Australian opals appeared on the world market during the 1890's, the Hungarian mines in which opal had been discovered before, perpetuated the notion that Australian opal was not genuine. Perhaps this was because the Australian gems had a fire not seen in overseas specimens.

Indeed, by 1932, the Eastern European opals were unable to compete with Australian opals and ceased many overseas mines stopped production. This is how Australia won the title of premier opal producer of the world.

There is a uniqueness about Australian opal. Most of the production is from sedimentary rocks and there are no such deposits anywhere else in the world, according to Anthony Smallwood, opal research scientist and lecturer.

Jewellery Decisions gemmologist and trainer Sarah Gambi says Australian opals are high in quality: "You need three things to judge a good opal - the background, the pattern and the colour - and Australia had all three."

Others believe it's hard to judge a good opal on three factors only. Smallwood says the vibrancy of the colours and patterns of Australian opals are outstanding: "Really good opals have this vibrancy and 'zing' about the colours that often just leap out at you," he says.

One stigma that has plagued the opal over the years is that it is considered bad luck by some. Sunshine Coast retailer Opals Down Under is quick to dispel the myths on its website: "The 'bad luck' myth is the result of centuries of misinformation, superstition, wives' tales and jealous diamond traders spreading rumours. Opal has also been considered a good luck talisman and lucky charm throughout the ages and has been prized by many civilisations."

It certainly hasn't stopped overseas customers and celebrities enjoying the stone - US media mogul Ted Turner famously gave actress Jane Fonda a massive black opal engagement ring, and there have been many others. Gambi also says: "The Japanese love this stone. For them, it is said to bring good luck."

Opal is the traditional birthstone of October.

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



Image courtesy Michelle Schellnegger, Lightning Ridge

## From Rags to Riches

### Chapter 39 – Trapped at Boundary Rider

*The Opal Express*

*The American Opal Society*

With the last sale of the opal our financial situation has improved to the tune of us having now just on \$ 7,000.00 in the kitty. And things don't look as bleak anymore.

I asked Johnny to get this morning a couple of Ladders from the claim and meet me at Lunchtime in the shop so I can take him to the claim on Boundary Rider so he can check out the shaft etc.

I also realized that we will have problems in getting the compressor close to the shaft, I would have to ask Trevor how much he would charge me to make a track for the Ute to get closer to the shaft, but first things first, we don't even know if we going to work on this claim.

I left for the shop and Johnny went to the claim on Tea Tree Hill.

Doug The Manager was waiting for me and said, ' I got some news for you, I got you a shop assistant it is a lady and her name is Hilda she is from Germany she is here on the fields with her husband Walter and her brother Werner.

They are working at German Gully, she will be in at 9am and then you can organize the times you want her etc.' I replied 'that's great Doug, I hope she is ok as I would like a little more time as you know.' Doug acknowledged and just said, I don't care how and what you do, you know you got Card Blanche, as long as the Shop shows profit you can stay away as much as you like.' All I need is the occasional afternoon or morning when we had some problems I said.

Just like German precision sharp on 9am Hilda walked in, she was quite nice looking lady, well presented a few years older I assumed.

We exchanged introductions and she told me she was working in her Aunts Deli in Adelaide and is fully aware of what goes on in a shop.

I told her all I want is cleanliness and punctuality. I gave her the pay structure, and explained Saturday morning is the busiest time of the week

She cannot have any time off on Saturdays or on days when I make Small goods and when we receive meat delivery.

She was happy with everything and told her she can start first thing tomorrow, she replied why not today? Ok get changed there is a closet next to the Toilet where Anne kept the white coats and aprons go and see if they fit.' Few minutes she came out and she looked just perfect, 'great now let me show you, what's going on here.' After the morning, she was quite ok with what we went through, and I felt confident about her.

Doug came in and pulled me aside and asked, I gave him thumbs up.

He smiled and said 'great, good work.'

Lunchtime approached and Johnny popped his head in. I told Hilda I am going for lunch she can shut the shop and go for lunch as well.

She nodded and I disappeared with Johnny, he followed me as I was leading the way to Boundary Rider.

Upon arrival at the claim I showed him everything and he looked and said, I have a good scrounge around, I think there is enough cable on the lights to get some down in to the shaft.

I told him to estimate how long it will take to make this claim suitable to work with winch, compressor etc. And definitely make sure to check the stratum of the ceiling support, since we had been told that Boundary Rider is not suitable to work underground.

Johnny replied' you will have a full report this evening.' Excellent I said I leave it all in your hands.

One good thing this claim is much closer to our Shack, talking about Shack, I have to go to the Post office and post the letter off to Anne and Harry.

What I offered them was \$ 1,000.00 down payment and the balance to be paid in 3 month from the date of agreement.

On the way back to the shop I dropped the letter into the Post Office and went to the shop.

Hilda was there, so we opened the shop and I continued my instructions and information about the shop etc.

Come closing time we went outside and there was a man waiting which smiled when he saw her, She introduced him to me as her husband Walter and we shook hands exchanged a few niceties and then they went on their way. And I went home I had my meat and I picked up a couple of bottles of Beer.

When I arrived Chris was greeting me with a little kiss and so was Beatrix, I said how are my two favourite women?' Fine they replied, I told Chris about the new assistant, which stirred a bit of interest with Chris, as she asked how old is she, is she good looking, has she got a husband and all questions which indicate some form of jealousy, I enjoyed that immensely and made sort of evasive remarks about her looks and age etc. I could see Chris was a little squirming at my replies. I just burst out laughing and hugged her and said to her 'darling you are the best looking woman on the field, and believe me, I got everything I wished and hoped for with you and Beatrix, yes she is a nice person and quite presentable which is good for the shop, and I met her husband also a nice guy, but it is nice to see you are jealous.'

Chris prepared dinner and there is no sign of Johnny, I commented

'He is late; I wonder if he went to have a drink or something. 'Chris said we wait for another hour and then we have a look and see if we can find him.' The time passed and no Johnny, it is getting dark which means it must be nearly seven pm, I said 'let's go' Chris got Beatrix and got in the car and started first down to Gus place, I could not see the Ute, I went in and ask and nobody has seen him, we drove then to the Tuckerbox and again the same no one has seen him. I did not feel good about this, I got in the car told Chris the result and told her we go to the Claim. We drove to the claim and low and behold there was the Ute. We got out and walked up the shaft hole and we heard someone shouting 'anybody up there,' It was Johnny, I noticed both ladders are down the bottom and I said are you ok, what happened,' Johnny replied the ladders came off the hooks when I was halve way down and I fell with the ladders, one of the hooks hit me on the head just above the eye i was out for a while,' I said You just hang on there I get a rope and tie it to the Ute and pull you up, but first tie the ladders on I will pull them up first with my hands.' I told Chris to keep Beatrix away from the shaft and I will give her instructions when I pull Johnny up .I went and got the long rope of the Ute and a piece of 4 by 4 timber, I went to the shaft and shouted down 'watch out the rope is coming down, tie up the ladders,' I threw down one ends of the rope and waited for Johnny to climb up a few rungs and tie the rope to the top rung of both ladders. Once done he shouted ok, and i started pulling up the Ladders, As soon as they cleared the shaft I untied them and lifted them out individually. I place then the 4 by 4 across the shaft edge to give the rope a smooth surface, I threw the ropes down again and said to Johnny to tie it under his arms and I will use the ute to pull him out,' He acknowledged and I told Chris to watch my signal and let Johnny know that I am starting to pull. Chris nodded and I went to put the Ute in a position so I can drive at least 30 feet to pull him to the top.

I maneuvered the Ute in a position and I think I got enough room between a couple mullock heaps to pull 30 feet, I took up as much slack as possible and tied the rope to the tow bar, I shouted to Chris that I am ready, I could hear her shouting to Johnny, and then Chris shouted to me 'Ok', I slowly accelerated and could feel the final take up and slowly I moved the Ute, when I heard a scream 'Stop'. I did and got out and went to the shaft, There was Johnny hanging in over the edge of the timber and I went over there and pulled him up the rest of the way. Chris and Beatrix came over and Chris said very concerned 'Oh my God' Johnny are you Ok?' I live' he said. His face was covered with blood which was from a cut he had above his eyebrow, and it is still seeping, I am sure this was not the peg which caused this injury, I bet it was the ladder when it fell and Johnny maybe wanted to catch it or whatever. I said we got to get this stitched I said to him, we go to the Hospital and see what we

can get done. He was arguing against it but I insisted and so I said to Chris we take him up there but first I just put everything on the Ute and get it ready for pick up. Everyone went in the VW and we drove to the hospital, I let Johnny, Chris and Beatrix out and I said 'I go and see Trevor and see if he can come with me and bring the Ute home.'

I got to Trevor's place they were outside enjoying a cold beer, I told what happened and Trevor said no problem let's do it.

We went and got the Ute which Trevor drove back and went home, I drove up to the hospital and saw Chris she told me that Johnny is being admitted and has to stay at least over night, I looked and Chris said, that Johnny started vomiting, and the Nurse said 'he has concussion and this is a sign of it, he better stay with us for tonight.'

Well so be it I replied and can we see him, the nurse said 'he is just being stitched up, in a few minutes you can' This is marvelous, why can't there be at least one month go by without any kind of trauma, every time I think I got it licked something else happens. I wonder if it is like that for all Opalholics or just for this one. Now I have to go and have a look at this claim to see what's going on down there. I will do this on Saturday afternoon. I don't want Johnny to do any work at all this week; I want to make sure he got a clean bill of health when he starts back.' Chris hugged me and said, 'Look Sweetheart what you already achieved, we got some money behind us, we got a comfortable place, good friends and most of all we got each other.'

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**Rare gold coin from 1880 sells for \$2.75M at auction**

*FoxNews.com , September 24, 2013,*



The 1880 Coiled Hair Stella, one of the very finest known, brought an astonishing \$2,754,000. (Bonhams)

A gold coin known to collectors as one of the "white whales" in the coin collecting world was sold Monday for \$2.75 million at Bonhams auction house in Los Angeles, [Mining.com reported](#)☞

The 1880 \$4 Coiled Hair Stella is six grams of pure gold and was never released in circulation.

According to [Stack's Bowers](#)☞ the coin was designed by famed United States Mint engraver George T. Morgan when there was a push in the United States for its own international coinage to enable easier trade with Europe. Congress rejected the initiative. But not before a handful were produced.

"They are so rare, they come on the market maybe once or twice, at most, every decade"

- Paul Song, the director of rare coins at Bonhams  
The precise number minted has been lost, but it is widely believed that no more than 10 to 15 exist. This particular coin that was sold is considered to be the finest certified piece ever auctioned.

"They are so rare, they come on the market maybe once or twice, at most, every decade...That particular gold coin, there's only 10 or 12 now, and most of these are in public institutions or private

collections," Paul Song, the director of rare coins at Bonhams [told Reuters](#).☞

Placing its rarity aside, the coin was graded Cameo PF-67 by [Numismatic Guaranty Corporation](#)☞, which is the top rating given.

The sale of the 1880 Coiled Hair Stella from the "Tacasyl Collection of Magnificent United States Proof Gold Coins" exceeded early estimates by 66.6 percent and places the coin among the top 10 most valuable U.S coins sold at auction.

In January, a 1794 silver dollar called The Flowing Hair Silver Dollar sold for a total of \$17.2 million. That coin is known as the first U.S. dollar struck and the finest known, Reuters reported.

The Coiled Hair Stella, which is six grams of pure gold, features an image of Lady Liberty facing to her right with her hair coiled on the top of her head. One the back of the coin, an inscription reads, "ONE STELLA" and "400 CENTS."

"The braided plait on top of Liberty's head is delicately and intricately engraved, and the portrait of Liberty is fully modeled and has a distinct individual personality," Scott reportedly said.

Among other sales from the Tacasyl Collection included an 1879 Coiled Hair Stella that fetched \$1,041,300 and an 1855 Type 2 gold dollar that brought in \$397,800.

From <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2013/09/24/rare-gold-coin-from-1880-sells-for-275m-at-auction/>

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**Gem's Value Sank Like a Rock**

**Tourist's rare benitoite worth far less than \$50,000**

*By Bob Pool, September 17, 2013*



Henry Carradine, left, and his Austrian girlfriend, Karina Ille, look at the rare star-shaped benitoite gem they found during a visit to an open-pit mine near Coalinga, Calif., in August. The gem had been valued by one Vienna newspaper at \$50,000, but officials later determined it to be worth far less: 365 euros, or roughly \$487. (Lawrence K. Ho / Los Angeles Times)

The tiny star-shaped gem that Vienna violin student Karina Ille discovered last month during a visit to California had turned her into a media star by the time she returned to her home in Austria.

The 21-year-old tourist and her boyfriend, Henry Carradine, discovered the unusual stone -- a deep-blue piece of benitoite -- Aug. 11 at an open-pit mine near the Central Valley town of Coalinga.

**For The Record**

Los Angeles Times Wednesday, September 18, 2013 Home Edition Main News Part A Page 4 News Desk 1 inches; 56 words Type of

**Material: Correction**

Rare gem: In the Sept. 17 LATE xtra section, a photo that accompanied an article about the value of a star-shaped gem found by an Austrian student did not show the gem in question but another piece of benitoite. The same photo also was published with an article in the Aug. 18 California section announcing the discovery.

Visitors there pay \$70 to spend the day digging through the rubble and can take home any benitoite they find.

Because San Benito County is the only place in the world where gemstone-quality benitoite is found, it was designated California's state gem in 1985.

The Times published an account of her discovery, and Austrian newspapers picked up on the story about the music students' rare gem. One Vienna paper even placed a value on Ille's find: \$50,000. Trouble is that paper apparently plucked that valuation out of thin air.

David Schreiner, owner of the California State Gem Mine where Ille's benitoite was discovered, had refused to put a value estimate on it.

The most sought-after benitoite star is the six-pointed "star of David," which can be worth as much as \$50,000. Only about two dozen are known to exist.

Ille's tiny star has only five points, still a rare find.

"I really got excited by seeing that. Benitoite is the rarest gem in the world and stars are rare," Schreiner said at the time. He recalled giving Ille a cotton-filled pill bottle to protect the gem.

"What she found is worth a lot of money. I'd probably put a price on it too low," he said.

When Ille got to customs, Austrian officials apparently put their stock in the Vienna newspaper's story.

Agents confiscated the blue crystal and announced they would be fining her and charging 20% of the star's value because she had failed to declare that it was worth so much.

They also said that they would have the gem appraised themselves. "She and Henry are being treated like criminals," Carolyn Carradine said earlier this month.

Her son, whose uncles are Keith Carradine and the late David Carradine, is studying in Vienna to become a symphony pianist.

"She had no idea what it was worth when she came home," she said. The only value they were aware of, she said, was the fee to spend the day mining.

Carolyn Carradine, an actress and artist, and Christopher Carradine, an architect and former Disney Imagineer, were in Vienna on Monday visiting their son when Ille received word that Austrian officials had finally determined the star's value.

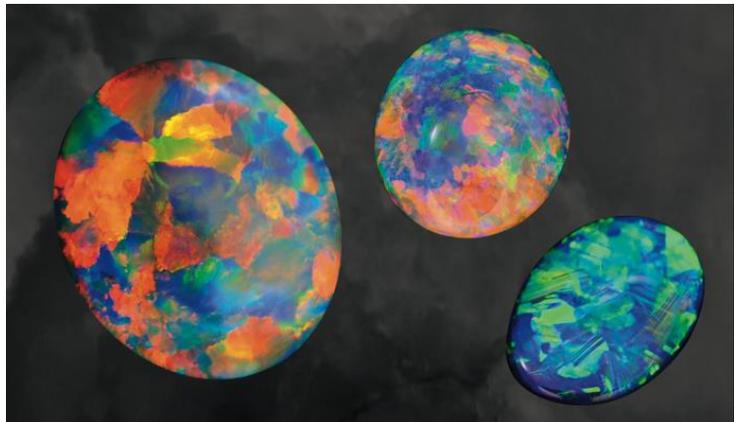
Three hundred and sixty-five euros, or roughly \$487.

"The limit is 430 euros, so there is no duty or fine," Carolyn Carradine reported from Vienna.

Better yet, Austrian officials said they are returning the benitoite star to the music student.

bob.pool@latimes.com

from <http://articles.latimes.com/2013/sep/17/local/la-me-star-dispute-20130917>



Images from Cody Opal Australia

**The Art of Opal Cutting**

*October 07, 2010*

Australia's national gemstone is also one of the most complicated to cut. GAA opal experts Anthony Smallwood and John Krook explain why it is an art form in its own right.

The cutting and fashioning of gemstones is an art. It is often forgotten that while there is an inherent beauty in the crystal nature of transparent gemstones, this is not always present in the opaque or translucent gemstones. Non-transparent stones – even those of great beauty or value such as opal – are often mistakenly referred to as ornamental or semi-precious gems.

Opal is such a mysterious gemstone that often its beautiful play of colour is hidden. Only an experienced opal cutter can produce an exquisite gemstone. So the opal cutter is an artisan of great importance, who alone can reveal an opal's hidden beauty.

So how does an opal cutter begin? An examination of the rough is key, as the origin and variety of opal will often determine what a cutter does; in this way opal is like no other gemstone.

A cutter working on a Lightning Ridge (NSW) black opal will require a different skill to a cutter who is about to produce a gem from Queensland boulder opal, who again will treat the rough material differently to the cutter of a superb South Australian Andamooka or Coober Pedy crystal opal. Each variety possesses its own unique challenge for the cutter in terms of the thickness of the opal and the material that forms the back of the gem (ironstone for boulder, black patch for black opal, and so on).

Once the opal cutter has established the thickness of their opal they can assess what shape will produce the best gem from the rough and show the best "face".

Generally, the cutter's biggest focus is to create a full-faced gemstone of the most vibrant colour and to polish it to a mirror finish. Every opal is unique, so a cutter's experience and intuition are important to success.

When it comes to boulder opal, the cutter must first assess how thin the opal veneer on the ironstone might be.

There's often not much to work with here. Often less than a millimetre in thickness, the cutter won't want to waste any precious opal. So they will intentially expose the layer of colour and follow it or trace it in an undulating nature to expose the vibrant colours. To allow this, boulder opal gems will often have an irregular surface and be cut in a free shape or free-form with irregular outline.

The opal cutter working with Lightning Ridge black opal, however, will often have the benefit of a thicker colour bar (as compared with boulder opal), so may choose to create a cabochon; cutting a high-domed precious gem if the colour bar agrees, or a lower-domed cabochon if that's all that is available.

It is likely he will produce an oval-cut gemstone as this is generally the most commercially viable shape. But free-form and irregular shapes are also produced for exotic designer jewellery.

Crystal opal and Light opal may be used to create both standardised-sized opal cabochons for jewellery and for more individually shaped free-form and opal carving.

Much of the commercial grade opal jewellery with standardised, calibrated sizes is cut from Light and Crystal opal from the South Australian fields. That's not to say plenty of these stones aren't still available for more exquisite shapes and carvings.

In considering the 'face' of the opal the cutter also takes into consideration the possibility of finding one of many named opal patterns – including 'butterfly wing', 'Chinese writing', 'harlequin' (often miss-used), 'rolling flash' and 'flagstone' among others.

Opal folklore is as vibrant as the stone; unique to Australia and to the outback regions of Australian pioneers from the 19th century.

As world renowned Australian opal expert Len Cram says, "Opal is like gold, once the fever is in your blood you can never get it out". Any opal cutter knows how right he is.

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

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## October 2013 Gem & Mineral Shows

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

2-6—JOSHUA TREE, CA: Annual show; Hi-Desert Rockhounds, Sportsman's Club of Joshua Tree; Sportsman's Club of Joshua Tree; 6225 Sunburst St.; Daily 9-6; free admission; rocks, minerals, jewelry, gold panning; contact Roger Thompson, 60886 Natoma Trail, Joshua Tree, CA 92252, (760) 902-5340; e-mail: rogerthompson@mac.com; Web site: [www.jtsportsmansclub.com/gem.html](http://www.jtsportsmansclub.com/gem.html)

4-6—DEL MAR, CA: Annual show; Gem Faire Inc.; Del Mar Fairgrounds; 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults and students (12 and up) \$7, children (11 and under) free; fine jewelry, gems, beads, crystals, silver, rocks, minerals, exhibitors, on-site jewelry repair, hourly door prizes; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: [info@gemfaire.com](mailto:info@gemfaire.com); Web site: [www.gemfaire.com](http://www.gemfaire.com)

5-6—SPRINGFIELD, OR: Annual show; Springfield Thunderegg Show; Guy Lee Elementary School; 755 Harlow Rd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4:30; free admission; contact Jim Nelson, (541) 687-8100; e-mail: [tworockyj@aol.com](mailto:tworockyj@aol.com)

5-6—SPRINGFIELD, IL: Annual show; Lincoln Orbit Earth Science Society; IL State Fairgrounds; IL Bldg., 801 Sangamon Ave.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$2, seniors \$1, students and children free; dealers, minerals, fossils, jewelry, demonstrators, exhibits, kids' activities, silent auction, door prizes, grand prize; contact Ed Wagner, (309) 838-7782; e-mail: [LOESSeditor@gmail.com](mailto:LOESSeditor@gmail.com); Web site: [loessonline.org](http://loessonline.org)

6—FALLBROOK, CA: Annual show; Fallbrook Gem & Mineral Society; FGMS Bldg.; 123 W. Alvarado St.; Sun. 10-4; free admission; gemstone identification, gold panning, geode cracking, Wheel of Fortune, silent auction, special exhibits, raffle, street fair, society museum and gift shop; contact Angela Hicks, (760) 728-1130; e-mail: [fgms@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fgms@sbcglobal.net); Web site: [www.fgms.org](http://www.fgms.org)

11-13—BIG SUR, CA: Annual show; South Coast Community Land Trust; Pacific Valley School; 69325 Hwy. 1, Los Padres National Forest, between Monterey and Cambria; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; free admission; jade collecting; contact Kirk Brock, PO Box 1349, Carmel Valley, CA 93924, (831) 659-3857; e-mail: [jademan1@hotmail.com](mailto:jademan1@hotmail.com); Web site: [www.bigsurjadefestival.com](http://www.bigsurjadefestival.com)

11-13—HILLSBORO, OR: Annual show; Portland Regional Gem & Mineral Association; WA County Fairplex; 873 NE 34th Ave.; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$5, children (12 and under) free; more than 30 dealers, fossils, rocks, gems, minerals, jewelry, beads, kids' games and activities, exhibits, speakers, demonstrations, door prizes, silent auction; contact L. Smith, Portland Regional Gem & Mineral Show Association, PO Box 5401, Portland, OR 97228; e-mail: [PortlandRegionalDealerChair@gmail.com](mailto:PortlandRegionalDealerChair@gmail.com); Web site: [www.PortlandRegionalGemandMineral.org](http://www.PortlandRegionalGemandMineral.org)

11-13—PLEASANTON, CA: Wholesale and retail show; Gem Faire Inc.; Alameda County Fairgrounds; 4501 Pleasanton Ave.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults and students (12 and up) \$7, children (11 and under) free; fine jewelry, gems, beads, crystals, silver, rocks, minerals, exhibitors, on-site jewelry repair, hourly door prizes; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: [info@gemfaire.com](mailto:info@gemfaire.com); Web site: [www.gemfaire.com](http://www.gemfaire.com)

11-13—SACRAMENTO, CA: Wholesale and retail show; Gem Faire Inc.; Scottish Rite Center; 6151 H St.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults and students (12 and up) \$7, children (11 and under) free; fine jewelry, gems, beads, crystals, silver, rocks, minerals, exhibitors, on-site jewelry repair, hourly door prizes; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: [info@gemfaire.com](mailto:info@gemfaire.com); Web site: [www.gemfaire.com](http://www.gemfaire.com)

12-13—ANDERSON, CA: Show and sale; Shasta Gem & Mineral Society; Shasta District Fairgrounds; 1890 Briggs St.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-4; free admission; exhibits, gold panning, kids' activities, raffle, dealers, demonstrators, door prizes, silent auction, gems, jewelry, fossils, minerals, beads, equipment; contact Kelly O'Leary, PO Box 1130, Palo Cedro, CA 96073, (530) 722-7133; e-mail: [kelly13@shasta.com](mailto:kelly13@shasta.com); Web site: [shastagemandmineral.com](http://shastagemandmineral.com)

12-13—GRASS VALLEY, CA: Annual show; NV County Gem & Mineral Society; NV County Fairgrounds, Main Exhibit Hall; 11228 McCourtney Rd.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$2, students and children free; T-rex skull display;

contact Joyce Emerson, 1653 Tulip Circle, Auburn, CA 95603, (530) 885-4338; e-mail: joycegem@att.net  
 12-13—TRONA, CA: Annual show; Searles Lake Gem & Mineral Society; SLG&MS Show Bldg.; 13337 Main St.; Sat. 7-5, Sun. 7-4; free admission; field trips, mineral dealers; contact Bonnie Fairchild, 84830 12th St., Trona, CA 93562, (760) 372-5356; e-mail: slgms@iwvisp.com; Web site: www1.iwvisp.com/tronagemclub  
 12-13—VISTA, CA: Annual show; Vista Gem & Mineral Society; Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum; 2040 N. Santa Fe Ave.; Sat. 10-5; free admission; jewelry, gems, beads, rough rock, gem ID, free museum admission; contact Ray Pearce, 753 Abbywood Dr., Oceanside, CA 92057, (760) 726-7570; e-mail: raysrocks@cox.net; Web site: vistarocks.org  
 12-13—WALNUT CREEK, CA: Retail show; Pacific Crystal Guild; Civic Park Community Center; 1371 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  
 18-20—AUSTIN, TX: Annual show; Austin Gem & Mineral Society; Palmer Events Center; 900 Barton Springs Rd.; Fri. 9-6, Sat. 9-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$5, seniors \$4, students (13-18) \$1, children (12 and under) 50 cents; Wheel of Fortune, gem mine, fluorescent cave, touch table, educational exhibits, demonstrations; contact Susan Postlethwait, 6719 Burnet Ln., Austin, TX 78757; Web site: www.austingemandmineral.org  
 18-20—COSTA MESA, CA: Wholesale and retail show; Gem Faire Inc.; OC Fair & Event Center; 88 Fair Dr.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults and students (12 and up) \$7, children (11 and under) free; fine jewelry, gems, beads, crystals, silver, rocks, minerals, exhibitors, on-site jewelry repair, hourly door prizes; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com  
 18-20—UKIAH, CA: Annual show; Crafty Cat Events; Redwood Empire Fairgrounds; 1055 N. State St.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$2, seniors and students \$1, children free; dealers, gems, beads, jewelry, minerals; contact Johnita Wemken, PO Box 704, Penryn, CA 95663, (916) 212-1647; e-mail: info@craftycatevents.com; Web site: www.CraftyCatEvents.com  
 19—WEST HILLS, CA: 15th Annual Show; Woodland Hills Rock Chippers; First United Methodist Church; 22700 Sherman Way; Sat. 10-5; free admission; dealers, gems, minerals, fossils, jewelry, displays, silent auctions, gold panning, demonstrations, country store, games, free hourly door prizes,

grand prize raffle, hands-on activities; contact Mary Beth Pio, (818) 349-9164; e-mail: info@rockchippers.org; Web site: www.rockchippers.org  
 19-20—AMARILLO, TX: Annual show; Golden Spread Gem & Mineral Society; Amarillo Civic Center; 400 S. Buchanan, Regency Room; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$3, children (under 12) free; dealers, demonstrations, door prizes, exhibits, silent auction, wheel of fortune; contact Wanda Finley, 9170 FM 1151, Claude, TX 79019, (806) 944-5464; e-mail: finfran@midplains.coop  
 19-20—CAYUCOS, CA: Annual show; San Luis Obispo Gem & Mineral Club; Cayucos Vets Hall; 10 Cayucos Dr.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission; 13 dealers, gems, minerals, fossils, carvings, jewelry, beads, jade, crystals, meteorites, lapidary and metaphysical items, jewelry-making demonstration, door prizes, end-of-show drawing; contact Kim Noyes, 7343 El Camino Real #301, Atascadero, CA 93422, (805) 610-0603; e-mail: kimnoyes@gmail.com; Web site: www.slogem.org  
 19-20—PLACERVILLE, CA: Annual show; El Dorado County Mineral & Gem Society; El Dorado County Fairgrounds; 100 Placerville Dr.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$4, children free; gems, minerals, jewelry, displays, sales, demonstrations, fossil exhibit, free rocks and activities for kids; contact Arlene Williams, (530) 676-2472; e-mail: info@rockandgemshow.org; Web site: www.rockandgemshow.org  
 19-20—SEDONA, AZ: Annual show; Sedona Gem & Mineral Club; Sedona Red Rock High School; 995 Upper Red Rock Loop Rd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; adults \$3, children (under 12) free; more than 40 dealers, rocks, gems, minerals, fossils, beads, jewelry, Kids' Corner, displays, demonstrations, hourly raffle, grand prizes; contact Gayle Macklin, PO Box 21222, Sedona, AZ 86341, (520) 921-0100; e-mail: gayleis@gmail.com; Web site: www.sedonagemandmineral.org  
 19-20—WHITTIER, CA: Annual show; Whittier Gem & Mineral Society; Whittier Community Center; 7630 WA Blvd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission; "Rocks from A to Z"; dealers, minerals, jewelry, gems, beads, collectibles, lapidary demonstrations, club rock sales, silent auction; contact Marcia Goetz, 755 W. Dike St., Glendora, CA 91740, (626) 260-7239; e-mail: joenmar1@verizon.net  
 26-27—LOS ALTOS, CA: Annual show; Peninsula Gem & Geology Society; Civic Center/Youth Center; One San Antonio Ave.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$3, students \$2; Children's Wheel, dealers, prizes; contact Steve Jobe, (408) 834-5384; e-mail: steve\_jobe@sbcglobal.net; Web site: www.PGGS.org

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# American Opal Society Membership Application

FILL IN APPLICABLE INFORMATION		DUES / FEES)	AMOUNT PAID
DUES: SELECT ONE	RENEWING MEMBERS	\$30	
	NEW MEMBERS	\$40	
INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP FEE (All addresses <u>outside</u> of USA)		\$10	
PRINTED NEWSLETTER FEE (Paper copy postal mailed instead of PDF file by e-mail)		\$5	
ADDITIONAL BADGES (Your First Badge is <u>free</u> when joining)		\$10	
TOTAL PAID DUES plus International, Print or Badge Fees if Applicable:			

Please make check or money order payable to "American Opal Society". Mail payment and application to:  
**American Opal Society; PO BOX 4875; Garden Grove, CA 92842-4875**  
 An optional, quicker method of payment is via the Internet. To pay, just visit the membership page on our website at [http://opalsociety.org/aos\\_application\\_by\\_web.htm](http://opalsociety.org/aos_application_by_web.htm) and complete the form. You may pay with a Credit Card or via PayPal account. The transaction is completely secure and the AOS never sees your credit card number. The AOS PayPal account is [membership@opalsociety.org](mailto:membership@opalsociety.org).

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

**NAME BADGE ORDER FORM:**  
 PLEASE PRINT NAME AS YOU WISH IT TO APPEAR ON YOUR BADGE using up to two (2) lines of text for your name, nickname, or name of your opal related business.

**MEMBERSHIP ROSTER:** The AOS publishes a membership directory once per year in its Newsletter, the *Opal Express*. Your name will be included. Please check what additional personal information that you want listed for other members. If it is different from the information above, please note that on the application.

- Address   
  Phone   
  E-mail   
  Website

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

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**Are Your Dues Due Now?**  
 PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL or NEWSLETTER E-MAIL. There should be a date that shows the current month/year of your membership. If the date is older than the current date, your dues are overdue. A warning will be stated if you are overdue.  
 A Renewal Grace Period of two months will be provided. Please note, however, that as the system is now set up, if your renewal is not received you will be AUTOMATICALLY dropped from membership thereafter. It is your responsibility to assure your dues are current.  
 Thank you,  
 The Editor

# The Opal Express

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

**Volume #46 Issue #10  
October 2013**

## Some Topics In This Issue:

- Outback Opals
- From Rags to Riches : Ch. 39 Trapped at Boundary Rider
- 1880 gold coin sells for \$2.75M
- Gem's Value Sank Like a Rock
- The Art of Opal Cutting

## Important Dates:

### October 10 - General Meeting:

- Dr Brandon Browne from CSUF, will discuss the Mammoth Volcano

TO:

# **October 10 General Meeting Dr. Brandon Browne on the Mammoth Volcano**



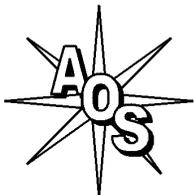
### — GENERAL MEETINGS —

2nd Thurs. of the Month  
7:30 pm - 9:30 PM

Garden Grove Civic Women's Club  
9501 Chapman Ave.  
Garden Grove, CA 92841  
(NE corner of Gilbert & Chapman)

### MEETING ACTIVITIES

Opal Cutting, Advice, Guest Speakers,  
Slide Shows, Videos, Other Activities



## The American Opal Society <http://OpalSociety.org>

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