

The Opal Express

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Happy New Year

Table of Contents

President's Message	1
Members Only Website Password	1
January General Meeting	1
Welcome to New Members	1
Did You Know?	1
Bench Tips	2
Check It Out!	3
Kernowite: New mineral found on rock mined in Cornwall	4
What is a Mineral?	5
The Mystery of Opal Miner – Carney Jimmy	6
Jasper or Agate	7
Upcoming Events	8

President's Message

Happy New Year Opalholics!

With the many challenges we faced this year, I hope everyone managed to have a nice Christmas holiday.

I hope you're all keeping busy with projects. There are many on-line classes where we can all learn new skills in our chosen ventures. YouTube is an excellent source for all kinds of tutorials, as well as interesting stories and articles – not to mention lots of funny cat videos, if you are so inclined!

As always, please stay safe, stay healthy and keep busy. And please continue to social distance and wear your masks!

Stan McCall
AOS President
Custom Creative Gem Cutting

Member area access is available only to members in good standing. Any other entry is unauthorized.

USER NAME: member
PASSWORD: Freeform27 (case sensitive)

--January General Meeting--

Due to the on-going pandemic stay-at-home order, we are not planning on a General Meeting for January.

Stan McCall, AOS President



Let's extend a hardy AOS welcome to our newest members!

Donald Pulitzer
Jay Valle

Thank you Donald and Jay for joining the American Opal Society!

Did You Know?

The first New Year's celebration dates back 4,000 years. Julius Caesar, the emperor of Rome, was the first to declare January 1st a national holiday. He named the month after Janus, the Roman god of doors and gates. Janus had two faces, one looking forward and one looking back. Caesar felt that a month named after this god would be fitting.

~ Bench Tips ~

This page will be dedicated to bench tips and techniques from our readers. If you have bench tips you'd like to share, let us know! Bench tips can be anything - metal work, lapidary, wirework - anything creative that you would like to share. Send your tips to: aos.editor.02@gmail.com

ADJUSTABLE CHUCK FOR DREMELS

by Brad Smith

Many of us have a Dremel motor tool to use at home or when out to a class or workshop. The one thing that makes this tool much more productive is the addition of one inexpensive option, an adjustable chuck.

A simple and inexpensive (\$12) adjustable chuck solves all of this. It's available in most large local hardware stores or model making outlets. Tightening the chuck is done easily by hand to any size shaft. No key is required.

The basic motor tool as sold typically comes with a collet chuck. This means you have to use a wrench to change every tool bit, you have to switch collets to use different shaft sizes (3/32 or 1/8 inch bits), and you can't use ordinary drills at all - only the special ones that have a 3/32 shaft.

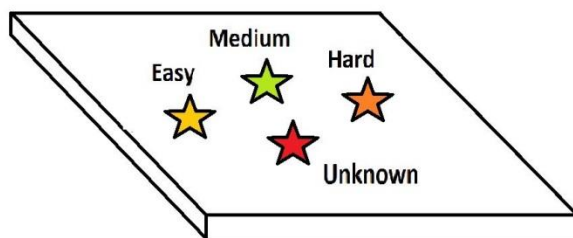


IDENTIFYING UNMARKED SOLDERS

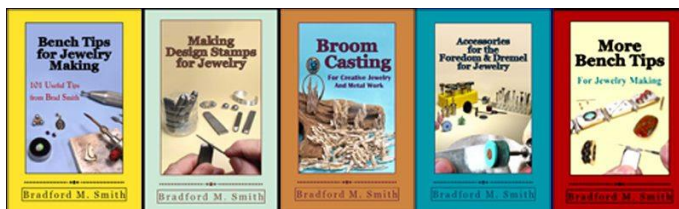
by Brad Smith

There are plenty of ways to mark your sheet or wire solders, but suppose you forgot to mark them and have a couple that you can't identify. The answer is to compare the melting temperature of the unknowns with that of a known solder.

What I do is take a thick scrap of copper or nickel and arrange several solders on it. Ideally, I would have a sample of easy, medium and hard known solders surrounding the unknown solder. Then I heat the plate from the bottom and watch the order in which the solders melt.



Work Smarter & Be More Productive with Brad's "How To" Jewelry Books on [Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith](https://www.amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith)



Check this out!

Rock & Gem Magazine is excited to announce a new digital series entitled, “Glorious Gemstones” which will accompany “Illustrious Opals” in our free digital series library housed on the Rock & Gem website:

<https://www.rockngem.com>

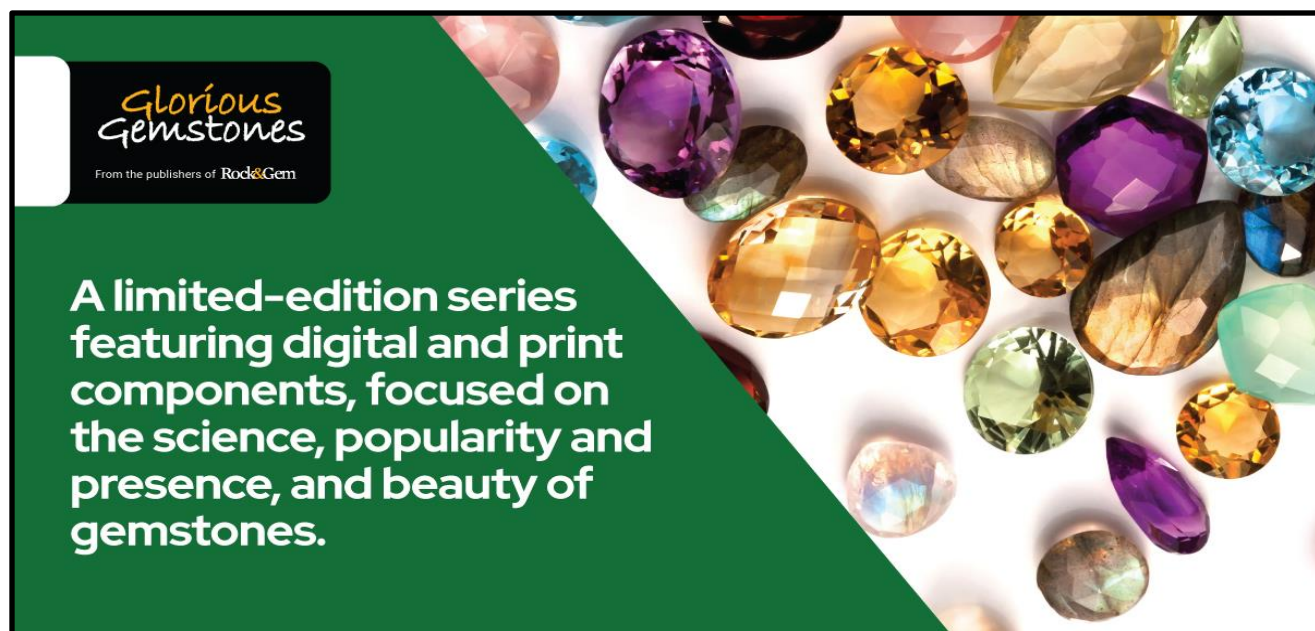
Glorious Gemstones:

Concept: A limited-edition series featuring digital and print components, focused on the science, popularity and presence, and beauty of gemstones.

Topics and Featured Elements: The science behind gemstones, review tools and gear for studying, cutting and displaying gemstones, examine the market for gemstones and learn about resources devoted to the appreciation of gemstones.

Timeframe: Launch series with two-page Sneak Peek: Glorious Gemstones column in the following 2021 issues of Rock & Gem (April, May, June, July, August). Publish three digital issues of Glorious Gemstones, 32 pages each in 2021: March, May, and July.

If you are interested in sponsorship information for this next limited-edition series, please go to: <https://www.rockngem.com/Glorious-Gemstones-Sponsorship-Opportunity-Final.pdf>



Glorious Gemstones
From the publishers of Rock & Gem

A limited-edition series featuring digital and print components, focused on the science, popularity and presence, and beauty of gemstones.

KERNOWITE: NEW MINERAL FOUND ON ROCK MINED IN CORNWALL



Kernowite has a distinctive dark green colour

Photo courtesy of Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London

An "amazing" new type of mineral has been discovered by scientists analysing a rock mined in Cornwall about 220 years ago.

The dark green mineral has been named kernowite after Kernow, the Cornish language word for Cornwall.

A group led by Natural History Museum (NHM) mineralogist Mike Rumsey made the discovery while studying a rock taken from Wheal Gorland mine in St Day.

Mr. Rumsey said: "It's amazing that in 2020 we are adding a new mineral."

For centuries, mineralogists believed the green crystals to be a variation of another mineral, liroconite, but Mr Rumsey and his team found it has a different chemical composition.

Blue liroconite is highly prized by collectors around the world, and the majority of it comes from the Wheal Gorland site.



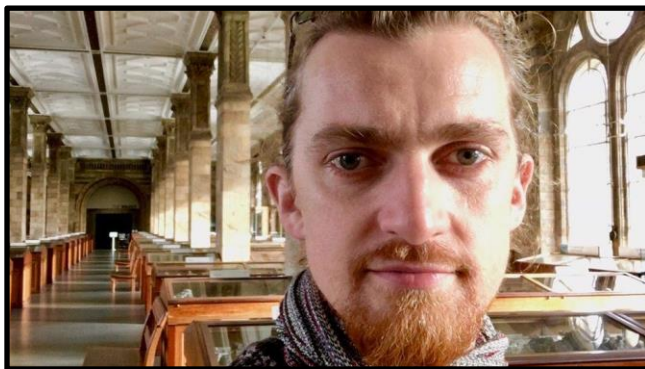
The mineral was discovered within a rock specimen that has been at the Natural History Museum in London since 1964.

Photo courtesy of Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London

Cornwall has a rich mining history with Unesco, world heritage status and is known globally for the discovery of minerals.

Mr. Rumsey, principal curator of minerals at the NHM in London, said: "A lot of these discoveries happened over 100 years ago when the mines were still active, so the discovery of a new mineral from Cornwall, particularly one that is related to the region's most famous mineral, is really quite amazing.

"Considering how many geologists, prospectors and collectors have scoured the county over the centuries in search of mineral treasure, it's amazing that in 2020 we are adding a new mineral."



Mike Rumsey is principal curator of minerals at the Natural History Museum, which has one of the most important collections in the world.

Continued on Page 5



A new mineral is discovered in the UK every three or four years on average, according to the NHM

Photo courtesy of Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London

The new description has now been approved by the International Mineralogical Association and the new type will be published in Mineralogical Magazine next year.

Mr. Rumsey said most lironite comes from Wheal Gorland, adding: "The mine was used between around 1790 and 1909, but it has been demolished now.

"There is a housing estate on it and there is nothing left. It's an extinct locality, we can never go back."



The mine where it was discovered has now been built over.
Photo courtesy of Google

"What we've got is a bit like a little time capsule," Mr. Rumsey said.

"The fact that this sample was preserved in a museum means that we can do this kind of research because we'd never be able to go back and collect any more."

WHAT IS A MINERAL?



The structure of the crystals is the same as lironite, but kernowite contains iron instead of aluminium, creating the different colour.

Photo courtesy of Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London

- A mineral is naturally occurring chemical substance formed by geological processes
- A rock is an object formed of one, or many minerals in combination
- Many minerals form beautiful crystals, the most prized being those with bright colours, glass-like transparency and attractive crystal forms
- The gemstone minerals and their varieties, like diamonds, emeralds and rubies have been desirable since ancient times
- The Natural History Museum's mineral collection is one of the most important and comprehensive collections of its type in the world, containing about 185,000 specimens.

Both articles, "[Kernowite](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-cornwall-55396421): New mineral found on rock mined in Cornwall" and "What is a Mineral?" are from the following source:

https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-cornwall-55396421?utm_term=OZY&utm_campaign=pdb&utm_content=Wednesday_12.23.20&utm_source=Campaigner&utm_medium=email

The Mystery Opal Miner - Carney Jimmy

by Len Cram

About 100 hundred years ago there was an old opal miner in south-west Queensland who was too mean to buy meat. He used to tether lizards and eat them. Also, according to one report, he salted and ate his saddle horse after it died of old age. He was a Scot and a miser, and the only name by which he is known to history as 'Carney Jimmy'. Carney is the bushman's name for the frill-necked lizards that formed part of his staple diet. It is said he had learned to eat them whilst living with the Aborigines.

Jimmy was tight-lipped and never disclosed how much he got out of his mine. Even today there are people who believe a fortune lies buried somewhere on Carney Jimmy's claim. He was as silent a man as ever worked on an opal field, though rumor had it he was well educated. He never volunteered any information about himself, yet he was liked, as far as he allowed anyone to like him.

His accent betrayed his Scottishness and the only letters he received were from Scotland, but no-one ever knew from who. He also received Scottish newspapers and took a solemn interest in the land of his birth – indeed, far more that he took in Australia. His mine, 'The Little Wonder', produced an enormous amount of crystal opal. Since Carney Jimmy's claim joined it, the miners always supposed he had won great wealth too. He was not at all ashamed of his diet of lizards, in fact, he used to say they were very energizing.

He was never known to buy meat, eggs or flour, but once or twice a year he bought a little rice and some tea. In season, he would

go eat goanna eggs and he used to boil pig-week, which he called bush cabbage. Jimmy was reputed to be lucky and he certainly worked hard. One of the great differences between him and the other miners was that he worked alone.

To everyone's astonishment, he once accepted an offer to go halves in a partnership with Joe Bridle. They worked a new mine together, the Yellow Nell, and for a while Jimmy lived a more normal life, eating damper and even bacon and eggs. The patch of opal produced a nice parcel of opal in which Bridle sold his share for \$280, but Carney hung onto his. He was never known to sell opal. When the opal gave out in the mine, Carney drifted back to his solitary life and his tethered lizards.

Curiosity about Carney's secrecy became so great that a close watch was often kept on him. No one intended to steal his opal, at least not whilst he was still alive, they simply wanted to know about it. He was so secretive that no many of the miners often said only the desert stars and dingoes would ever know where he hid his treasure.

Strange noises seemed to come from Carney's claim at night. The most frequent noise was the muffled thud of a pick on sandstone. Often men crept under cover of darkness to see what was going on, but as they got near to Carney's claim, the noises would stop. If Carney had heard something approaching, he had phenomenal hearing. It seemed more likely he had a sixth sense that warned him of people coming to secretly watch him. Yet often, as the intruder left, the thudding would begin again.

Carney also made mysterious night trips on his rather peculiar horse. People on the filed believed he was taking opal to a rendezvous in the darkness. Carney's horse was a brumby of sorts whose breeding had run out many years earlier. He was practically hairless and toothless and in some ways his life bore a resemblance to that of his master.

Continued on Page 7

Like Carney, his horse simply appeared on the field one morning. Nobody knew where he came from and Carney offered no information. The horse had never been in the district before. Generally, Carney kept the horse 15 kilometers away and every now and then would bring him back to camp. Carney always rode him at night on his strange journeys. Was it to sell opal or to hide it? No-one ever found out. Wherever he went his hiding place was not close at hand, for sometimes he would be away three or four days. A few men tried to track him but they always failed.

Eventually, one night the horse died. People said he had long outlived his usefulness and Carney Jimmy had killed him for food. It was certain that about the time the horse died, Carney had a change of diet. A large amount of salted meat was strung out to dry between the mulgas. Carney claimed it was kangaroo meat, but old hands said it was Carney's horse.

He did not outlive his horse very long. Peter Nurra, an Aborigine who seemed closer to Carney than anyone else, found him lying of the ground near his camp. He told Nurra that he had been bitten by a snake, but would be alright as he was going to make strong a strong herbal tea that would 'fix him up'. Carney died near the clump of mulgas to which he used to tether his horse.

So the story of this silent, mysterious Scot ended. Curiosity about his treasure lived on and he had scarcely been buried before his camp was torn apart in the hectic hunt for his riches. Carney had hidden it well, for it was never found. Today, only the desert stars know its hiding place in those lonely, dingo-infested hills.

© Copyright: A Journey with Colour – A History of Queensland Opal. Len Cram 1998. From <http://www.opalauctions.com/opal-stories.php>.

Jasper or Agate?

by David Olsen

Jasper and agate are the rocks we hobbyists deal with most often in pursuit of our goals as lapidaries and collectors. Do we really understand the difference between the two?

Both jasper and agate are composed of extremely fine interlocking quartz crystals called cryptocrystalline quartz. As such, they are both members of the fine-grained quartz family referred to as chalcedony. Chalcedony occurs throughout the world in beds, bands, nodules, geodes, botryoidal masses, as a replacement of fossils, wood tissue or other minerals, and as a cementing material. It is deposited from silica-rich waters, often carrying other impurities.

It is the presence of these: mineral impurities which stain the micro-quartz grains to produce the wide variety of colored patterns, banding effects and inclusions that differentiate the basic "gem" forms of cryptocrystalline quartz - jasper and agate - from ordinary drab chalcedony

In general, agate is a transparent to translucent form of chalcedony in which the coloration takes the form of regular bands, rings, clouds, wispy inclusions or distinct groups.

Jasper, on the other hand, can be somewhat translucent, but it is most often opaque...with color usually much darker than agate and...totally random with respect to distribution and pattern.

From the Owyhee Gem 1/95 via the 2/03 Flatirons Facets

UPCOMING EVENTS

Reader: If your organization has an opal or rockhound-related event, please email particulars to info@opalsociety.org. Upcoming Event listings will be included at the discretion of The Opal Express editor as space and scheduling permit.

February 20-21, Antioch CANCELLED!

Antioch Lapidary Club
Jewelry, Gem & Rock Show
Contra Costa County Fairgrounds, 1201
West 10th St., Antioch
Hours: 10 am – 5 pm daily
Admission \$6, Children 12 and under/Scouts
in uniform – Free
Active Military with ID – Free
Contact: (925) 301-6957,
brenda.miguel@yahoo.com

February 27-28, Vallejo CANCELLED!

Valejo Gem & Mineral Society
56th Annual Gem & Mineral Show
Solano County Fairgrounds, McCormack
Hall, 900 Fairgrounds Dr.
Hours 10 am-5pm
Contact: (415) 254-1506,
dduhonvgms@gmail.com

March 6 – Ventura, CA CANCELLED!

Ventura Gem & Mineral Society
Ventura County Fairgrounds, 10 W. Harbor Blvd,
Ventura 93001
Saturday 10 am-5 pm, Sunday 10 am-4 pm
A So-Cal tradition for 59 years! (Note: this listing is
tentative and is conditioned upon conditions of the
moment at the Ventura County Fairgrounds due to
the COVID-19 pandemic.)
50+ exhibits of gems, fossils & lapidary arts; demos;
raffle silent auctions; flea market & plant sale; 15
dealers; kids booth & free resources for teachers.
Contact: (805) 312-8467, info@vgms.org

March 13-14, 2021, Arcadia CA CANCELLED!

Pasadena Lapidary Society
“Inspiration Unearth”, 62nd Annual Tournament of Gems
Arcadia Masonic Center, 50 W. Duarte Rd., Arcadia
Hours: 10-5 Daily
Contact: Ellen Ferrell 1-727-512-0381
Email: ellenbf207@aol.com
Website: pasadenalapidary.org

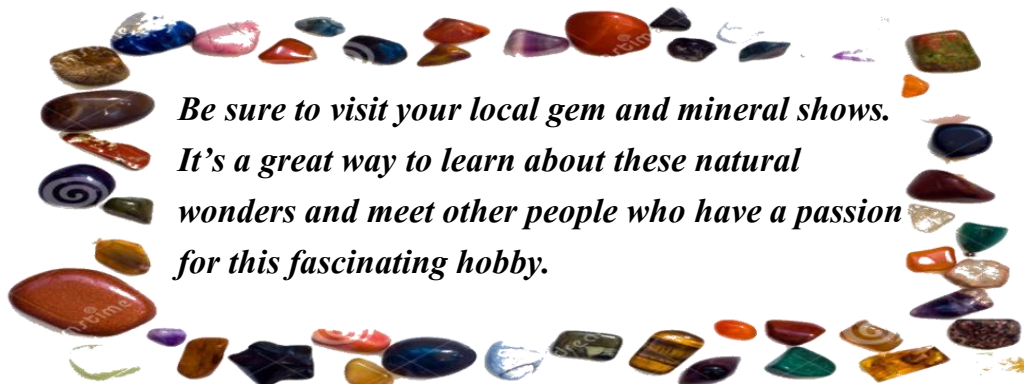
April 10-11, 2021, Mariposa, CA

Mariposa Gem and Mineral Club
Mountains of Minerals Show
Mariposa County Fairgrounds, 5007 Fairgrounds Rd.
Saturday 10 AM-5 PM, Sunday 10 AM-4 PM
Website: <http://mariposagemclub.org>

June 12-13, 2021, Escondido CA

Palomar Gem and Mineral Club
340 N. Escondido Blvd., Escondido CA 92025
Saturday – 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM-4PM
Palomar Gem and Mineral Show – presented by the
Palomar Gem and Mineral Club. Held in the California
Arts Centers museum and ballroom. A beautiful indoor
facility. Secure for vendors and comfortable for attendees.
30-35 dealers.
Website: pgmcshow@palomargem.org

As information becomes available, we will
post updates to these and upcoming shows
in future newsletters.



Be sure to visit your local gem and mineral shows.

*It's a great way to learn about these natural
wonders and meet other people who have a passion
for this fascinating hobby.*

American Opal Society Membership Application

FILL IN APPLICABLE INFORMATION		DUES / FEES	AMOUNT PAID
DUES:	RENEWING MEMBERS	\$35.00	
SELECT ONE	NEW MEMBERS	\$45.00	
INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP FEE (All addresses <u>outside</u> of USA)		\$15.00	
PRINTED NEWSLETTER FEE (Paper copy postal mailed instead of PDF file by e-mail)		\$10.00	
ADDITIONAL BADGES (Your first badge is <u>free</u> when joining)		\$15.00	
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 via PayPal, please visit the membership page on our website at http://opalsociety.org/aos_application_by_web.htm to complete the form and make your PayPal payment. 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.

NAME	
BUSINESS NAME	
ADDRESS	APT # or PO BOX
CITY	STATE
ZIP OR POSTAL CODE	COUNTRY (IF OUTSIDE USA)
PHONE - Home ()	PHONE - Business ()
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 roster once per year in its newsletter, The Opal Express. Your name will be included. Please check what additional personal information you listed for other members. If it is different from the information above, please note that on the application.

☐ Address ☐ Phone-landline ☐ Phone-cell ☐ E-mail ☐ Website

Please sign here: _____

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-Editor
Please address all inquiries and exchange newsletters to:
Editor - Kathleen James
The Opal Express
PO Box 4875
Garden Grove, CA 92842-4875
E-mail: aos.editor.02@gmail.com

Are Your Dues Due Now?

PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL OR NEWSLETTER E-MAIL.

There will 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 Renewal Grace Period of two months will be provided. Please note, that as the system is 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

(revised 11/27/19)

The Opal Express

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

Volume 54, Issue 1

— GENERAL MEETINGS —

4th Wednesday of the Month
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Anaheim Community Center
250 E. Center Street
Anaheim, CA 92805



TO:



**No General Meeting
for January**



General Meeting Location at:

Anaheim Downtown Community Center

**250 E. Center Street
Anaheim, CA 92805**

Due to the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic and Governor Newsom's stay-at-home mandate, we are cancelling Board Meetings and General Meetings. If we find that using Zoom is a feasible alternative for our meetings, we will let members know the details.

American Opal Society

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Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/opalsociety>
YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCegTIH1IEyO7y8wdqvRfyUA?view_as=subscriber

Stan McCall
Russ Madsen
Kathleen James
Bart Gampe
Veronica Purpura

President
Treasurer
Editor
Webmaster
Show Chairman

(714) 220-9282
(562) 884-2254
(714) 828-1251
(310) 736-5528
(714) 501-9959

email: aos.president.01@gmail.com
email: aos.treasurer.01@gmail.com
email: aos.editor.02@gmail.com
email: aos.webmaster.01@gmail.com
email: aos.showchair@gmail.com