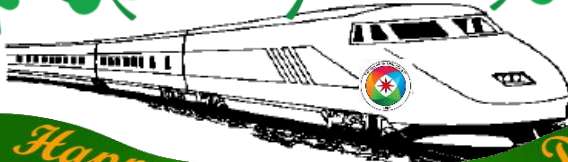


THE OPAL EXPRESS

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March 2021

Volume 54 Issue 3



Happy Saint Patrick's Day

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President's Message

Happy St. Patrick's Day Opalholics!



It's hard to believe that we have been in this pandemic for one year now. Our thoughts and prayers go out to our members, friends and family who have been affected by the virus.

If you have a project or story you'd like to share, please let our editor know. We would love to know what everyone is working on during this time.

In the meantime, 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)



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

Matthew Riggs

Thank you Matthew for joining the American Opal Society!



If you don't already follow us on facebook, you're missing out on some great videos about opal cutting and polishing!

Check us out at:

<https://www.facebook.com/AmericanOpalSociety/>

And don't forget to like our page!

Pioneer Opal Miners

by Mary Aracic

as told to AOS editor, Kathleen James



When writing our opal books, we wanted to research the gravesites of three well known discoverers of gem opal at the Quilpie Cemetery.

We were surprised to see a sign that said what it means!! “P394 Road Ends 100M” – the resting place of some old-time opal miners.

We found the well-tended gravesites of Joe Knehr and Joe Grguranic, but the gravesite of Joe Bridle proved difficult to find, so we sought help from the Quilpie Shire Council. According to their records, Joe Bridle died sometime between 1928 to 1934 and was buried in the older part of the cemetery.

It saddened us to think that a plaque, “No. 103” marked his grave. A man who had discovered gem opal at Stoney Creek in the Kyabra Hills in South-West Queensland, that had inspired Tullie Wollaston – a renowned opal dealer from Adelaide. A pioneer in the marketing of opal in Australia and overseas, who along with a mate, Herb Buttfield, set off by train to Maree in the hot summer of 1888 and on camelback to the opal fields of South-West Queensland, at great risk to their lives.

Imagine Tullie’s reaction when he saw a tin full of pale opal – riddled with sand through the colour bar scattered on the table!!

Was this opal that lay before their eyes, what they had travelled several weeks to see? These two men had endured clouds of flies, delirium from heat exhaustion, tainted water and the stench from dead animals.

Joe Bridle could see obvious disappointment in Tullie’s face, so informed him it was a secondary opal and took him to his mine. By the light of a candle, he took him through the underground workings. Tullie did see a chip off a gem opal amongst the opal dirt where Joe Bridle was following out traces. The next day Joe Bridle felt he could trust these two men and showed them his top grade fire opal. Tullie bought the opal and a friendship developed between the two men that lasted a lifetime.

Tullie Wollaston set sail by ship for London with this wife and baby. Upon his arrival in 1889, he was amazed to find Australian gem opal was unknown there. Tullie had a hard time convincing the gem dealers that these vivid coloured gemstones were real. The gem dealers had to admit that they were the most beautiful gems they had ever seen, but were afraid of these gems flooding the market.

Tullie assured the dealers that this type of opal was rare and that a lot of digging had to be done to find them. So the first opal deal was set and through an agent, the first cut and polished opals were sent to America.

While in England, Tullie called on the mother of Joe Bridle, who gave him freshly made cream cheese to give to her son at the other end of the world. Wrapped in tin foil, the heat of the tropics softened the cheese then set it hard again. By this time, the cheese smelt worse than a dead snake. But on this next visit to Kyabra Hills, he gave Joe the cheese especially sent out to him by his mother. Joe was so deeply moved that he ate every scrap of it that night with no ill effect next day.

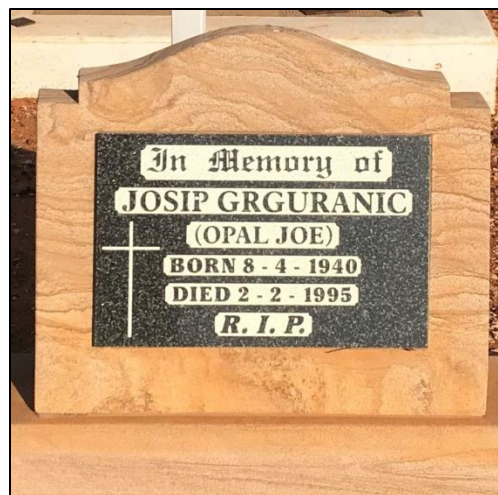
Continued on page 3

Continued from page 2

Surely a man like Joe Bridle deserved better than a little plaque, No. 103 on this grave. A man who goes down in history for setting the world ablaze with the most beautiful gem opal ever seen, So we sought the help of a very good family friend, Ian Laurence, who had a well-worded bronze plaque made in Italy.

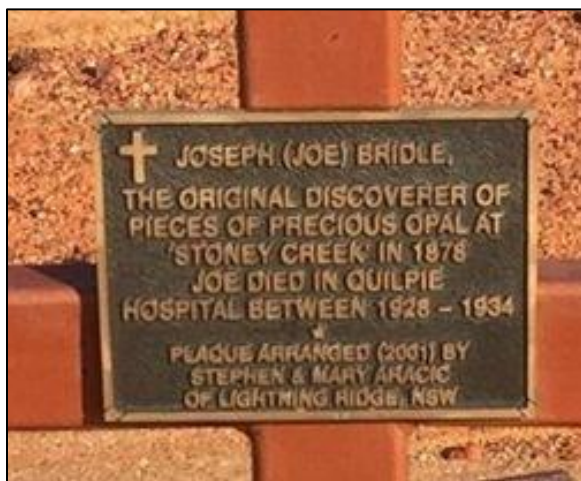
Stephen attached it to a cross he had made and took it to the Quilpie Shire Council. Then at a night of entertainment during the Quilpie Opal Expo, a speech was made in honour of Joe Bridle, when the cross with the lovely plaque was presented to them.

On our next trip to Quilpie, we visited the gravesites of the three famous miners named Joe, who go down in history for discovering such beautiful gem opal in Queensland, that brought miners to the area.

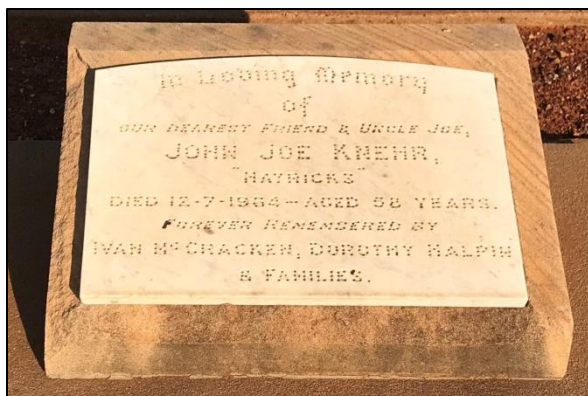


Joe Grguranic, Quilpie Cemetery

Pictures courtesy of Quilpie Cemetery.
<https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2431340/quilpie-cemetery>

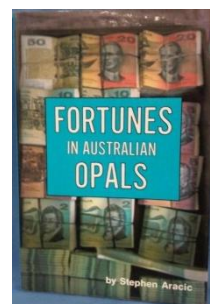
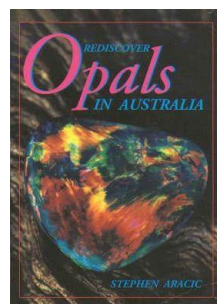
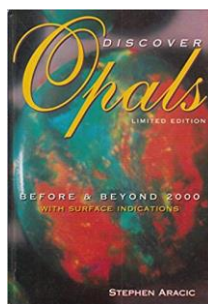


Joe Bridle, Quilpie Cemetery



Joe Knehr, Quilpie Cemetery

As AOS Editor, I would like to thank Mary and Stephen Aracic once again for allowing us to share their wonderful stories from Lightning Ridge. I look forward to sharing more opal stories from Stephen and Mary in future newsletters!



You'll find more opal stories from Stephen and Mary in these books.

~ 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

SHARP KNIVES FOR CUTTING MOLDS

by Brad Smith

Cutting molds is easier and more precise with a sharp blade. A new Xacto blade is sufficient for cutting RTV molds but is usually not sharp enough for vulcanized rubber. For that it's best to use scalpel blades available from most jewelry supply companies.

The #11 blade is triangle shaped, and the #12 is hawksbill shaped. I find the hawksbill is particularly nice for cutting the registration keys of the mold.



Brad is offering classes! One is on how to make Castellated Bezels - elegant in a ring, pendant or bracelet. The other is Adding Textures Without a Mill - for those who do not have access to a rolling mill. Please get in touch with Brad for more details.

BradSmithJewelry@gmail.com

USE YOUR THUMB

by Brad Smith

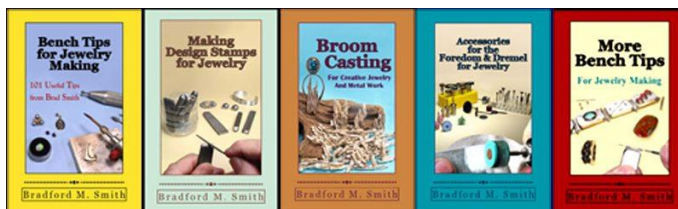
When using multiple bits in a Foredom, we often have to deal with several different shaft sizes - the usual 3/32 inch burs, the larger 1/8 inch shafts sizes and of course the many different sizes of drills. For some reason I really dislike having to turn the key multiple times to open or close the jaws of the handpiece chuck.

So I have two ways to speed up that task. For opening up the jaws, I just remember "four", the number of turns I have to make to open the chuck just enough from the 3/32 bur shaft size to the larger 1/8 bur shaft size.

For closing the jaws around a smaller shaft, there's a neat trick. Hold the new bit in the center of the open jaws of the chuck, put your thumb lightly onto the outer toothed collar of the chuck, and gently start up the Foredom. As the chuck turns, it will naturally tighten the jaws around the bur shaft or the drill bit. Then all you have to do is a final tightening with the key.



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



\$300,000 in Gold Dust Found in Sacramento Home during HVAC Installation

20 November 2012

SACRAMENTO (CBS13) – Sacramento homeowners called for what was going to be an expensive new heating and air system but ending up striking gold.

Workers installing the equipment found a secret gold stash hidden away in the house. They pride on customer service at Clark & Rush, but this is one guarantee they say they can't make, finding gold on every house call. The total value of what they found was \$300,000 worth of gold. The total cost of the HVAC installation was around \$6,500.

After hundreds and hundreds of HVAC installations, Steve Ottley said the jackpot discovery was one of a kind.

"I still can't believe it today," he said. "It's unreal. We kind of just looked at each other and said 'wow'."

Back in September, beneath the floor grill of an older home, Steve and his partner discovered 12 baby food jars filled to the brim with gold dust.

"I looked at it and said, 'I think that's gold,'" he said. Clark & Rush has been in Sacramento for 50 years and they're celebrating their golden anniversary. But don't expect a guarantee of "gold after every installation."

"That's one promise we can't make, but I can say this, the integrity and professionalism of Clark & Rush, every time we find this type of thing, we are always trustworthy and upfront," Mark Thyne said.

Where the gold came from is still a mystery. The lucky homeowners didn't want to be part of the story, but we're told they're handling their new gold just fine.



Baby jars filled with Gold Dust

And in a moment of honesty, Steve told us for a split-second he considered sneaking off with the golden discovery.

"I've had similar incidents happened to me where jewelry and gold was taken from me," he said.

Believe it or not, this isn't the first time this has happened at Clark and Rush. Back in the 1980s workers discovered \$25,000 worth of gold coins.

From <http://sacramento.cbslocal.com/>

Did You Know?

Considered by most authorities to be the biggest gold nugget ever found, the Welcome Stranger was found at Moliagul, Victoria, Australia in 1869 by John Deason and Richard Oates. It weighed gross, over 2,520 troy ounces (78 kg; 173 lb) and returned over 2,284 troy ounces (71.0 kg; 156.6 lb) net.



Join Us as We Celebrate 50 Years!

2021 marks the 50th anniversary of Rock & Gem and we are planning **a year-long celebration!**

With that, we've created exclusive **advertising options for owners of rock shops** to appear in Rock & Gem during our year-long anniversary celebration.

- Advertisement in new Rock Shop Directory section of R&G
- Featured in Rock Shop Shout-Out post one time on R&G social media feeds and one e-newsletter
- Complimentary digital copy of 50th Anniversary issue of R&G
- Shop information listed on R&G's sister brand site, [MyRockHub.com](https://www.myrackhub.com)

For details, please cut and paste the following link into your browser.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bEB9Anipe4zqzUM4PTBT-NO4mL2YMt2/_view

To learn more about these special offers, the 50th anniversary year-long celebration, commemorative issue, and any other advertising opportunities, contact Rock & Gem Sales Executive

Tracy Alvarez: Email: talvarez@beckett.com • Phone: 972-490-5212

Rock & Gem Mobile App is available on [Android](#) and [iOS](#).
DOWNLOAD NOW.



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.

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

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>

May 1-2, 2021 – Jackson, CA

Amador County Gem & Mineral Society
Kennedy Mine Gem and Craft Show
Hwy 49 in Jackson CA
Saturday – 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday – 10 AM – 4 PM
Contact: (209) 296-4061, blackwolf@vgoilcano.net

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

June 25-27, 2021 Lodi, CA CANCELLED!

CFMS Annual Show and Conference

August 14-15, 2021 – Arcadia CA

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

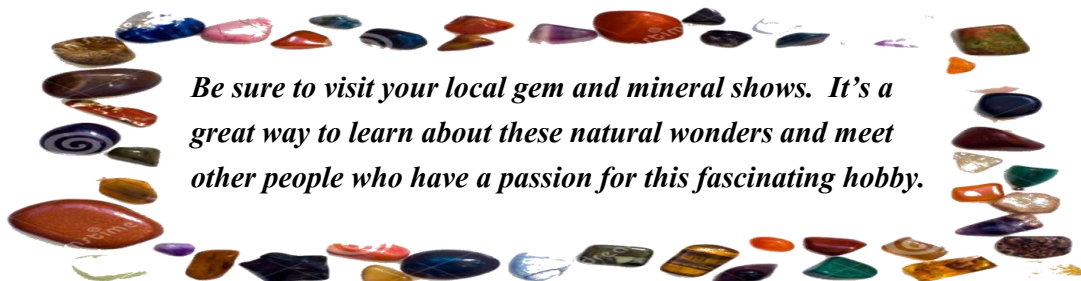
September 18-19, 2021 – Chico, CA

Feather River Lapidary and Mineral Society Silver Dollar
Fairgrounds
2357 Fair St., Chico, CA 95928
Saturday 9 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 9 AM – 4 PM
Contact: 1 530 586-7052; Website: <http://featherriverrocks.org>

October 9-10, 2021 – Los Altos, CA

Peninsula Gem and Geology Society
One No. San Antonio Road, Los Altos, CA 94022
Saturday and Sunday 10 AM – 5 PM
Contact: 1 (408) 834-5384, steve_jobe@sbcglobal.net
Website: <http://pggs.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 2

— 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 March**



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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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AmericanOpalSociety>
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
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email: aos.webmaster.01@gmail.com
email: aos.showchair@gmail.com