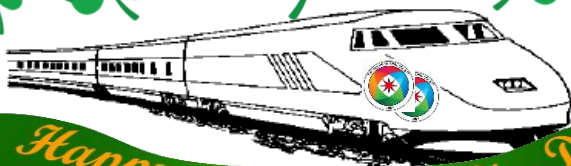


The Opal Express

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American
Opal
Society

March 2022

Volume 55 Issue 3



Happy Saint Patrick's Day

Table of Contents

President's Message	1
Members Only Website Password	1
Welcome	1
Did You Know?	1
Imaginology	2
Searchers Society Gem, Mineral and Jewelry Show	3
Alaska Auction to Feature Huge Opal	4
Bench Tips	7
Upcoming Events	8

President's Message

Top O' The Mornin' Opalholics!



Happy St. Patrick's Day! I hope everyone is getting ready for the wearin' o' the green on the 17th. We have some great news! On **Thursday, March 17th**, we will have our first Opal Society meeting since 2020! The meeting will be at the Anaheim Community Center and will start at 7:00 p.m. We are in the first conference room on the right. The meeting will be a show-and-tell of sorts of what we've all been doing for the past two years.

And speaking of the Anaheim Community Center, a SPECIAL THANK YOU goes out to Pete Goetz for securing our meeting room! It's not an easy task getting an on-going reservation at the community center, and Pete went the extra mile and took it upon himself to get our reservation in order. Thank you again Pete for taking care of this for the club!

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: RedflaSH79 (case sensitive).





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

Sandra Soehngen

Thank you Sandra for joining the American Opal Society!

Did You Know?

Pinching people on St Patrick's Day is thought to revolve around the leprechaun and the legend that wearing green makes one invisible to the mischievous fairies. As the dubious legend dictates, leprechauns would pinch anyone not wearing green – so people pinch those not wearing green to remind them.





Each April, OC Fair & Event Center transforms into Imaginology, a free family event produced by OC Fair staff that focuses on S.T.E.A.M. education and hands-on learning.

Children, teens, families and school groups dig into science, technology, engineering, art and math. Imaginology provides unique experiences for attendees of all ages from preschool to high school, and their parents and grandparents to build, create, play, observe and interact through activities that help them see the possibilities of a future in S.T.E.A.M. fields. Imaginology features make shops, demonstrations, competitions, hands-on activities and entertainment, as well as food and fun. Youth competitions give students the chance to be recognized for their unique talent and accomplishments.

What is S.T.E.A.M.?



Science



Technology



Engineering



Arts



Math

Imaginology was canceled in 2020 and held virtually in 2021. The event debuted in 1989 as Youth Expo and was renamed Imaginology in 2014. This free event is presented as a community give-back by OC Fair & Event Center and supported by local partners.

At Imaginology, kids and their families will not only see a world of wonder, but can participate in a wide range of fun and educational hands-on activities designed to inspire and encourage academic and career exploration.

All exhibitors at Imaginology are required to feature at least one hands-on activity that lands in one of the five S.T.E.A.M. subjects: Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics. This component of Imaginology is vital to the experience because it is what makes learning fun and relevant. Students are invited to build, interact and explore all kinds of activities using skills that directly correlate with a career.

Hours

Saturday, April 9, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Sunday, April 10, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Admission is FREE - Parking is \$10.

Location

Imaginology at the OC Fairgrounds

88 Fair Drive

Costa Mesa, CA 92626

THE SEARCHERS SOCIETY GEM, MINERAL AND JEWELRY SHOW IS BACK!



Searchers Society



61st Annual

Gem, Mineral and Jewelry Show

Free

Gratis

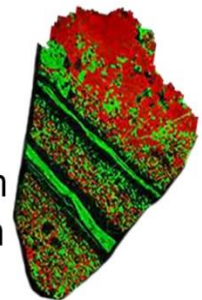


Brookhurst Community Center
2271 W. Crescent Ave, Anaheim, CA

Saturday, April 30th, 2022 / hours 10am - 5pm

Sunday, May 1st, 2022 / hours 10am - 4:30pm

www.searchersrocks.org



Searchers Gem and Mineral Society

Free Admission & Parking! ¡Entrada Libre y Aparcamiento!

**Door Prizes
Gemstones-Minerals
Silent Auctions
Demonstrators
Exhibits
Gold Panning
Dealers
Children's Activities**



Brookhurst Community Center
2271 W. Crescent Ave, Anaheim, CA

**Premios
Piedras Preciosas
Subasta Silenciosa
Demostraciones
Exposiciones
Lavado de Oro
Vendedores
Actividades para Niños**



Alaska Auction to Feature Huge Opal Stashed Away for Years

Newser
18 February 2022

Nick Cline gets calls about all kinds of items people want to sell through the Anchorage auction house where he works. But he was caught off guard by a call he got last fall from a man saying he had "one of the largest opals in the world." "I was extremely skeptical but extremely excited," said Cline, a partner and appraisal specialist with Alaska Premier Auctions & Appraisals. According to the auction house, the opal, dubbed the "Americus Australis," weighs more than 11,800 carats and is one of the largest gem-quality opals in existence. It also has a long history, per the Associated Press. Most recently, it was kept in a linen closet in a home in Big Lake, north of Anchorage, by Fred von Brandt, who mines for gold in Alaska and whose family has deep roots in the gem and rock business.



Dan Newman, left, the founder of Alaska Premier Auctions and Appraisals, and Nick Cline, a business partner, pose on Friday in Anchorage, Alaska, with the "Americus Australis," thought to be one of the largest gem-quality opals in existence. (AP Photo/Mark Thiessen)

The opal is larger than a brick and is broken into two pieces, which von Brandt said was a practice used decades ago to prove gem quality. Von Brandt said the stone has been in his family since the late 1950s, when his grandfather bought it from an Australian opal dealer named John Altmann. Von Brandt said the opal for decades was in the care of his father, Guy von Brandt, who decided it had been "locked up long enough, that it's time to put it back out in the world and see what interest it can generate." "He entrusted me to figure out which direction we wanted to go to part with the stone," von Brandt said. The family, with roots in California, exhibited the stone at gem shows for years, until the early 1980s, he said. His father then branched out into furniture and displayed it at his shop.



This opal specimen, said to be one of the largest gem-quality opals in existence, is seen in Anchorage, Alaska, on Dec. 20, 2021. (Dana Fuentes/Alaska Premier Auctions and Appraisals via AP)

Guy von Brandt eventually moved to Oregon and kept the stone "kind of tucked away" for many years, von Brandt said. Von Brandt said he brought it with him to Alaska more than a year ago as he weighed the best approach to a possible sale. Cline said the family has documentation surrounding the provenance of the opal. As

Continued on Page 5

part of his research, he contacted Fiona Altmann, John Altmann's granddaughter and general manager of Altmann + Cherny in Sydney, Australia. A spokesperson for the Gemological Institute of America said they couldn't comment on the opal as they hadn't seen it. The auction house said the gem was discovered in the same Australian field as the "Olympic Australis" opal, which weighs 17,000 carats. The auction company is seeking minimum bids of \$125,000 during the auction, which is set for Sunday, with a targeted sales price of \$250,000 to \$350,000, per Cline.



This opal specimen, reportedly one of the largest gem-quality opals in existence, is seen in Anchorage, Alaska, on Dec. 20, 2021. The item is set for auction on Sunday. (Dana Fuentes/Alaska Premier Auctions and Appraisals via AP)

<https://www.newser.com/article/4097947e93ee5afa1c5b5f5a14d73b81/alaska-auction-to-feature-huge-opal-stashed-away-for-years.html>

Rare 306-Carat Australian Opal Unlike Any Found in Last 80 Years

Santa Fe Designer Katherine Jetter Will Create Jewelry Piece

by TheImproper Staff
10 May 2013



Australian miner Bobby and the rare opal he found on his last day of work.



Katherine Jetter, a Santa Fe, New Mexico jewelry designer knows her opals, so it takes something special to raise her eyebrows. But a 306-carat stone found in Australia brought her to tears. She calls it "The Royal One."

Australia is known for rare gemstones and the Royal opal is far from the largest ever unearthed in the outback. They have ranged in sizes up to 1,000 carats or more. But this stone is unlike any other because of its color and its clarity. "It made me cry when I saw it and I think it will make people gasp at the very least when they see it," Jetter told local ABC television station KOAT.

The Australian miner, who is only identified by the name, "Bobby," discovered the stone the day he retired and is now ready to share it with the world. He's a hard-scrabbled prospector who has been scraping up a living in the harsh outback for decades, and realizes blessings come when least expected.

"You get it when the good Lord's ready to give you a bit of it," he said while in Santa Fe to meet with Jetter. "That gives you a buzz I can tell you."

He's working with Jetter to create a one-of-a-kind piece of jewelry. Jetter said a stone of this size and quality hasn't been found anywhere in the world since the 1930s. It's so precious, she's keeping it in a local bank vault.

From: <http://www.theimproper.com/art/1421/rare-306-carat-australian-opal-unlike-any-found-in-last-80-years/>

New Play-of-Color Opal from Welo, Ethiopia



Figure 1 - Welo Ethiopian Opals

A new source of high-quality play-of-color opal was discovered in early 2008 in Welo Province, Ethiopia, about 500 km north of Addis Ababa. This deposit is geographically distinct from the Mezezo deposit in Shewa Province, which was discovered in the early 1990s (see, e.g., Spring 1994 Gem News, pp. 52–53).

These contributors examined a parcel of about five rough and 30 cut Welo opals supplied by Opalinda and Eyaopal, the main distributors of this material. The cabochons showed good play-of-color (figure 1); the vast majority were white and transparent, but some had a bodycolor varying from light yellow to dark “chocolate” brown. Compared to Mezezo opals (e.g., J.-P. Gauthier et al., “L’opale d’Ethiopie: Gemmologie ordinaire et caractéristiques exceptionnelles,” *Revue de Gemmologie a.f.g.*, No. 149, 2004, pp. 15–23), those from the new deposit generally appear much whiter.

We noted all spectral colors in the play-of-color in our samples. Most of the cabochons were similar in appearance to opals from Australia or Brazil. However, many samples displayed a columnar structure of play-of-color opal within

common opal (figure 2), as first described in material from Mezezo (again, see Gauthier et al., 2004). This feature is only very rarely observed in opals from sources outside Ethiopia.

Welo opal is found in volcanic rock, possibly a rhyolite. The rough samples we examined consisted of opal (either common or play-of-color) cementing fragments of the host rock. By contrast, opal from Mezezo fills cavities in rhyolite, forming nodules. Despite these differences, the fact that columnar structures are seen in opals from both deposits (but very rarely from elsewhere) seems to indicate similarities in the conditions of their formation.

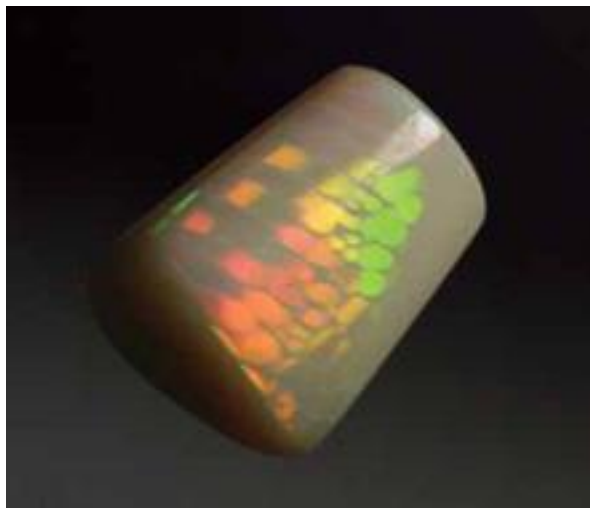


Figure 2 - Welo Ethiopian Opal

Benjamin Rondeau (benjamin.rondeau@univ-nantes.fr), CNRS, Team 6112, Laboratoire de Planétologie et Géodynamique, University of Nantes, France

Francesco Mazzero, Opalinda, Paris, France
Eyassu Bekele, Eyaopal, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Jean-Pierre Gauthier, Centre de Recherches Gemmologiques, Nantes, France
Emmanuel Fritsch

From <http://www.gia.edu/research-resources/gems-gemology/spring2009-contents/spring2009-featuredgni-ethiopian-opal.html>

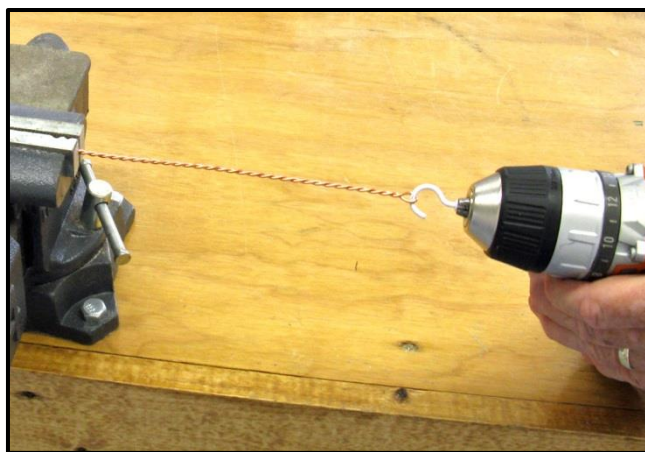
~ Bench Tips ~

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

TWISTING WIRE

by Brad Smith

Twisting wire can be done with an old hand drill but goes much faster with a power tool. My preference is to use a screw gun, although a Foredom should do well.



Just make a little hook out of coat hanger wire (or use a screw-in cup hook) and chuck it up in your screw gun. Grip the free ends of the wire in a vice and slip the looped end onto your hook. Keep a little tension on the wires as you twist.

Note that a power drill is too fast a tool for this unless you have one with variable speed.

SOLDERING PRONGS

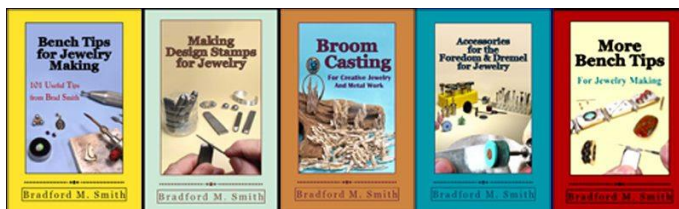
by Brad Smith

I often use prongs to hold an irregular cab or other object on rings and pendants. But prongs can be a little tricky to solder. You have to find some way to hold them all upright while soldering, and the simple butt joint that looks strong sometimes breaks when you start to bend the prong over the stone. There's nothing worse than having a prong break off when you're setting the stone *#~*!

I solved both problems with one little trick. It keeps the prongs in position for soldering, and it gives you a stronger joint at the same time.

Locate and center punch the position for each prong. Then drill holes a little smaller than your prong wire. Sand a small taper on the ends of your prong wires and stand them up in the holes. The wires support themselves, soldering is easy, and the joint is stronger because of the increased soldering area.

Smart Solutions for Your Jewelry Making Problems
[Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith](https://www.amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith)



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.

March 5-6, 2022 – Ventura, CA

Ventura Gem and Mineral Society
Ventura County Fairgrounds, 10 W. Harbor Blvd., Ventura
Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM
Gems and Minerals, fossils, jewelry, healing stones, silent auction, exhibits, dealers, kids activities, lapidary arts demonstrations, raffle, flea market, plant sale. A successful and valued South Coast show since 1963. We are happy to be back again after COVID!
Website: <http://www.vgms.org>

March 5-6, 2022 – Newark, CA

Gem and Mineral Society of Castro Valley
Newark Pavilion, 6530 Thornton Ave., Newark, CA 94560
Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 6 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 5 PM
Contact: info@mgscv.org
Website: <http://mgscv.org>

March 11-13, 2022 – Victorville, CA

Hours: 9 to 5 Daily
Victor Valley Gem and Mineral Club
46th Annual Stoddard Wells Rockhound Tailgate
Dry camping, silent auction, grab bags, spin the wheel, restrooms, handcrafted and faceted jewelry, slabs, cabs, findings, equipment, minerals and fossils. Tons of rough material and more.
Contact: smaquilter12@gmail.com

March 12-13, 2022 – Turlock, CA

Mother Lode Mineral Society
Stanislaus Fairgrounds, 900 N. Broadway in Turlock, CA 95380
Hours: 10 AM – 5 PM daily
55th Annual Rock, Mineral & Jewelry Show! EDUCATIONAL FAMILY EVENT! Rocks, Minerals, Fossils, Jewelry, Beads, Fluorescents, Children's activities, and More! Learn to make beautiful jewelry out of natural rocks and gemstones from our demonstrators.
Children's activities including making your own bracelet, Touch and See Rock cycle, Mineral and fossil display, Treasure Hunt, Geode cutting. Large Fossil Museum including Megalodon courtesy of The Tethy's Ocean Project. HUGE fluorescent walk-through display room.
There are over 45 dealers selling rocks, minerals, fossils, jewelry, beads, tools, & supplies. We have much much more. Visit our website for more info and pictures!
Admission: \$6 adult, children 12 and under free with paid adult.
Contact: Bud & Terry McMillin (209) 484-4416, terry.mcmillin@yahoo.com
Website: <http://www.turlockgemshow.com>

March 12-13, 2022 – Arcadia, CA

Pasadena Lapidary Society
"Inspiration Unearthed", 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: ellenbf2007@aol.com
Website: <https://www.pasadenalapidary.org>

March 19-20, 2022, Lemoore, CA

Lemoore Gem & Mineral Club
Lemoore Trinity Association Hall, 470 Champion St., Lemoore, CA 93245
Hours: Saturday, 10 AM – 6 PM; Sunday, 10 AM – 4 PM
Contact: (559) 362-8904, dmorrell321@gmail.com
Website: <http://lemooregemandmineralclub.org>

March 25-27, 2022, Clovis, CA

Fresno Gem & Mineral Society
748 Rodeo Dr., Clovis, CA 93612
The 2nd Annual Central Valley Gem and Mineral, sponsored by the Fresno Gem & Mineral Society, presents a great show for viewing, learning about and purchasing minerals, fossils, gems, beautiful handmade jewelry & much more! FREE ADMITTANCE AND PARKING Friday and Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM; Sunday, March 27th 10 AM – 4 PM
[Central Valley Gem and Mineral Show | Facebook](#)

April 1-3, 2022, Vista CA

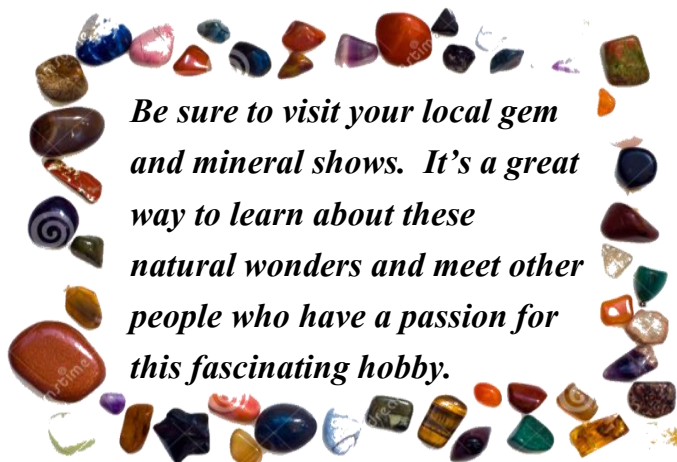
Vista Gem and Mineral Society
Vista Gem and Mineral Show
Antique Gas and Steam Engine Museum, 2040 N. Santa Fe Ave., Vista, CA 92083
Hours: April 1 & 2, 10 AM – 5 PM, April 3, 10 AM – 4 PM
Come on out for a fun-filled weekend at the Vista Gem and Mineral Show April 1-3, 2022. Held outdoors at the Antique Gas and Steam Engine Museum, you'll find everything from crystals and gems to rough, slabs, and cabs – and even lapidary tools. Not only can you find all the supplies you are looking for, but we are also known for our raffle held on Sunday afternoon. All prizes are donated by our vendors and VGMS. All proceeds go to support our non-profit school and you do not need to be present to win.
Contact: info@vistarocks.org
Website: <https://vistarocks.org>

April 9-10, 2022 – Mariposa, CA

Mariposa Gem and Mineral Club
Mountains of Minerals
Mariposa County Fairgrounds, 5005 Fairgrounds Road, Mariposa, CA 95338
Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM
Contact: mgmc@sti.net
Website: <http://mariposagemclub.org>

April 16, 2022 – Lake Elsinore, CA

Lake Elsinore Gem & Mineral Society
Rock and Craft Show
32097 Corydon Rd., Lake Elsinore, CA 92530
Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 4 PM
Contact: 1 (909) 208-6956, berylman50@aol.com



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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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 55, Issue 3

— GENERAL MEETINGS —

3rd Thursday of the Month
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

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

TO:



Meeting
March 17th at 7 p.m.
Anaheim Community Center



General Meeting Location at:

Anaheim Downtown Community Center

250 E. Center Street
Anaheim, CA 92805

We are having our first meeting since 2020 at the
Anaheim Downtown Community Center!!
March 17th at 7 p.m.

American Opal Society

Website: <http://OpalSociety.org>
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/opalsociety>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AmericanOpalSociety>
Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/opalsociety>
YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCegTIH1IEyO7y8wdqvRfyUA?view_as=subscriber

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Jamie Cassidy-Curtis	Secretary	

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