

THE OPAL EXPRESS

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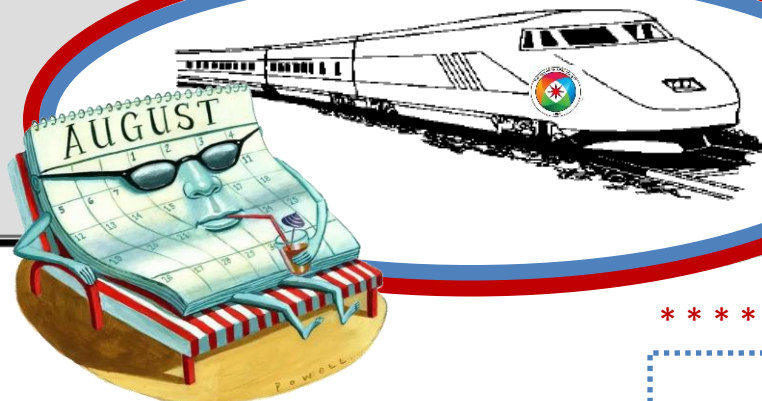


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President's Message

Greetings Opalholics!

Thank you to Paula Purpura for demonstrating her beautiful wire wrapping technique. We had a smaller group of attendees than usual, but that just made it possible to give each person more individual instruction.

In another week Lora and I will be heading to Nipomo for the Orcutt Gem & Mineral show. This is a great show with something for everyone! If you're planning on visiting the Central Coast the first weekend in August, stop by the show and say hello!

Until next time, stay safe, stay busy and stay cool!

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: WRappedcAB72 (case sensitive)

Fun Facts About the Month of August

In the original Roman calendar, August was first called Sextilis, Latin for the sixth month. It was renamed in honor of Rome's first emperor, Caesar Augustus. Later, January and February were added to the calendar, making August the eighth month.

In a standard year, no other month starts on the same day as August. But in a leap year, August begins on the same day as February.

The first sandwich was made on August 6, 1762, when the Earl of Sandwich asked for a dish with meat between two pieces of bread. Legend has it that he ordered the meal in the middle of a gambling game and didn't want to interrupt it.

The birth flowers of August are the gladiolus, representing calmness, infatuation and integrity and the poppy, whose red ones signify peace, while the white and yellow express consolation and wealth and success respectively.

From: <https://pripsjamaica.com/blogs/9-fun-facts-about-august>

Women in Opal

by Mary Aracic

as told to AOS editor, Kathleen James



Sue White, a pioneer opal miner since the early age of seven, when her dad, Alf White took the family to Lightning Ridge during the school holidays. Sue was so captivated that she wanted to venture down the mine shaft with her to gouge for opal!

Back in those days the only light down the mine to light up the wonderful colours of gem opal was by candlelight.

She was so excited to see the flicker of bright green/blue in the black potch that it was the beginning of a life-long love and involvement in the opal industry.

Her parents taught her to grade, cut, polish and value Lightning Ridge opals when she was a teenager.

Sue loved all the patterns and colours in opals so much that she enjoyed cutting and polishing each unique piece, much to the credit of her parents appreciation of gem opal.

Her dad always said that opal by nature will shape the way it should be cut. So “you do not have the right to reshape it into traditional oval or round – that may destroy the beautiful gem opal.”

Once the gems were cut and polished, the next step was for Sue’s mum to design a beautiful precious metal setting to suit the shape and character of the opal.

Sue would spend hours looking for ideas in jewellery magazines for settings that would be suitable for their opals. Most of the designs were traditional styles, therefore Sue would redesign them by adding her own ideas to make them look different and more unique.

They had fun times when the family and friends went fossicking along the river beds in search of agates, zircon and other interesting minerals to bring home and tumble in a tumbler that Sue’s dad had made especially for the job. To the young ones it was like a picnic.

In 1965, Sue’s dad decided to have a look at the Queensland opal fields from Winton down to Quilpie and then further down to Yowah. Her dad started to buy rough opal from the miners that he met during his trips to the opal fields.

He fell so much in love with Boulder Opal and the Yowah nuts and matrix opal that Sue’s mum decided to join dad to try their luck mining for opal in Yowah. So they pegged a claim near the “bore head” where they set up camp to have a supply of water. They applied for two mining leases which they later sold to another couple.

Her parents then moved camp to an area known as “Broken Gate” due to a wooden gate in need of repairs. A couple of old timers had been digging shafts in search of Yowah nuts, matrix opal and Ironstone bands. Tiny had to leave the area when his wife, Nell, got ill. But Tiny asked Sue’s dad if he would like to mine the area and he loved it so much that he took out a 10 acre mining lease and named it “Black Gate”.

In 1989, Sue decided to take up her own open-cut mining lease next to her dad. He helped her peg the area using his old Army compass and they cut down an old Mulga tree to make pegs for the boundary markers.

Continued on Page 3

They also painted white siltstone rocks to mark the corner angles of the lease, built a camp, bought heavy earth-moving equipment and started mining as soon as the leases were granted.

Sue decided to go back to Lightning Ridge in 1993 and mined in a partnership with a professional mining team at the Coocoran Opal Fields. They mined with underground diggers and blowers and washed their opal clay in an agitator at a dam site. Sue cut and polished their black opal nobbies and Queensland Boulder Opal during the summer months in Lightning Ridge and would then go back to join her dad in the cooler months.

In 1999, when back in Lightning Ridge mining, her dad came to visit her and one day came into cutting room at work! He stood silently watching her cut top quality black opal nobbies for her partners, ready to take to a buyer who was flying in from overseas. As she turned off the cutting machine to make them a coffee, her dad looked at her with eyes with a mournful look and said, "Sweetheart, didn't I teach you well enough not to cut away all that beautiful gem down the sink just to make a conformed shape of ovals and rounds to suite a mass-produced gold and silver trade." She stood in front of her dad and said, "I have to cut the opals in partnership this way because that's how the wholesale buyers want it." Her dad replied sharply, "To hell with the wholesale buyers. It's not up to them to decide how the miners cut their opals. It's up to the miners because they are the hard workers who risk their lives underground in hopes of finding opals to pay the bills so they can keep mining. Plus you don't have the right to destroy this rare gift of nature by cutting it away just to please the greedy wholesalers at your expense."

Sue felt that she had betrayed her dad's teachings, but on the other hand, she knew the way her partners wanted opal to be cut and polished. Nevertheless, Sue felt guilty as she knew what her dad taught her was right! She felt that something had to be done because if jewellers in Queensland buy his opals in all shapes and sizes, why can't you sell those natural shaped Black Opals in their natural shape? And stop wasting the work of Mother Nature to conform to the demands of others.

Sue went to bed that night thinking how they could make changes to preserve their rare and beautiful opal gems for the opal mining industry. Her dad suggested after breakfast that she should contact some of the best award-winning Australian jewellers and ask them how they would like to see opals cut and shaped.

She was surprised to learn that 99% of the jewellers preferred to have unusual, one-of-a-kind shapes for their handmade pieces. Sue sat down with her dad and invited some of her mining colleagues to come around for dinner and chat to see what they thought of the idea of starting an "International Designer Jewellery Awards Competition" in Lightning Ridge, home of the most prized Black Opal in the World. Some said it would not work and some said they would back her all the way.

Her dad said he would put in opal as prizes and some money as well. Sue put her savings with dad's and started the ball rolling by registering a non-profit association in Dubbo at fair trading.

Sue named it OJDAA, "Opal Jewellery Design Awards Association". Then she set up a committee of like-minded people to help her type her hand written invitations to enter an "OJDAA Jewellery Designers Competition".

Continued on Page 4

It took 9 months to get everything worked out ready to print, post and fax invitations to 2,000 jewellers world-wide and 2,000 more around Australia.

As the event was being held during the Annual Lightning Ridge Opal Festival, July 2000, Sue arranged to meet Mr. David Howell from the Lightning Ridge Mines Department to ask for assistance from the Department of Mineral Resources in Sydney. David arranged a meeting with the Minister, and they both flew to Sydney to discuss plans to add value to the opal industry by promoting “free-form, undulating surface cut opals as near to their natural shapes as nature intended”.

The Minister was very interested to add value to the opal mining industry. He was also very helpful in assisting by supplying showcases from his department in Sydney to display a beautiful rare opal collection valued at \$30 million Australian dollars, and named “The Natural Solid Rainbow Opal Collection”. For display to promote the free-form, undulating surface cut opals that are a privately owned collection made up of 166 natural nobby forms of Lightning Ridge gem opals that are cut to traditional and free-form shapes. The entries from the Opal Jewellery Design Awards Competition were also placed in the showcases during the 4-day event.

Sue invited three well-known, multi-award winning Judges, Mr. Nicola Cerrone, Jewellers from Sydney – Mrs. Barbara Gaush, White Cliffs and Mrs. Mandy Healy, Lightning Ridge, to do the honour of judging the jewellery entries. The Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. John Anderson attended and officially opened the inaugural exhibition in 2000.

The Lightning Ridge Opal Queens (past and present – 12 in all) modelled the winning jewellery pieces at the Black Tie Gala Awards presentation dinner that was held in the Lightning Ridge Bowling Club with 450 guests in attendance.

The OJDAA still operates as an bi-annual event since the first inaugural event in 2000, except for the 2020 competition that was cancelled due to COVID-19 lockdowns. After the outstanding success of the OJDAA Inc., 2000, 2001, 2003 events, Sue handed the President’s position over to Mrs. Lyn Carney, who successfully kept the event going as a “bi-annual competition.

In 2004, Sue decided to travel overseas as an ambassador for the Australian opal industry, by displaying the Natural Rainbow Opal Collection in several countries around the world for the next 18 years. In 2004, she was invited, along with Mr. Peter Sutton, to the Dubai City of Gold Conference in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, as the Australian delegation.

Sue has retired from overseas travel since 2018 to focus on mining, since the passing of her parents, Alf and Midge White. She is teaching her granddaughter, Lili, to mine and carry on the tradition when she retires. Lili has been a great help with many exhibitions in Lightning Ridge and Yowah. Sue’s daughter, Teena, has helped her mum with many projects and exhibitions, including OJDAA and the National Opal Exhibitions including OJDAA and the Opal Exhibition at the Gold Coast, Sri Lanka and Hong Kong.

In 2012, Sue registered a not-for-profit incorporated association in Dubbo, “Orana Glitz and Glamour Extravaganza” (OGGE).

She formed a small committee of the most wonderful people, including her lovely daughter, Teena, to help set up an exhibition at the Dubbo Civic Centre, to help raise funds for the Royal Flying Doctor service.

She contacted some of her family members and very good friends and mining colleagues from Lightning Ridge, including Stephen and I, to set up our beautiful opal books and our

Million Dollar Hat of Opals, also Eddie Maguire from Yowah Opal Fields, with his magnificent Yowah Opal Collection. Mark and Sandy Hodges, Sunshine Opals from Quilpie, along with Sue and Eric Stetzler and daughter Jodie with their beautiful Queensland Boulder Opals to go on exhibition with the National Solid Rainbow Opal Collection over the 4-day event. She also arranged for a good friend, a multi-award winning jeweller, Mr. Nicola Cerrone to attend and display some of his international award-winning masterpieces at the event.

The magnificent Elizabethan Diamond Ruff necklace was absolutely amazing – plus the Black & White Diamond encrusted, \$12 million dollar bikini that Jodie Meers modelled and the Serena Williams Opal, Diamond & Sapphire, white gold pendant that was designed and hand-crafted by Nicola Cerrone in his Leichhardt boutique in Sydney.

The opening ceremony was beautifully performed by four of Sue White’s granddaughters, plus four other students from the Dubbo Ballet Studio, who performed beautiful dances, dressed as beautiful little fairies by Linda Jackson with her colourful sild prints and fairy wings on each of the eight fairies.

Sue’s daughter, Teena, modelled the beautiful pendant at the gala dinner, along with several other models, including 12 beautiful Opal Queens that wore Linda Jackson’s colourful silk outfit, that she designed. The Opal Cave Jewellery, Lightning Ridge; Cerrone Jewellery Sydney, Lightning Ridge and Chambers of the Black Hand Jewellery, Lightning Ridge provided jewellery for the models to wear.

I modelled our Million Dollar Opal Hat, and Mrs. Iris Bohn, modelled the Magnificent Golden Eagle Opal & Diamond Brooch in her Akubra hat.

There were beautiful displays of gem quality opals by Cheryl and Trevor Hudson from Chambers of the Black Hand, Lightning Ridge.

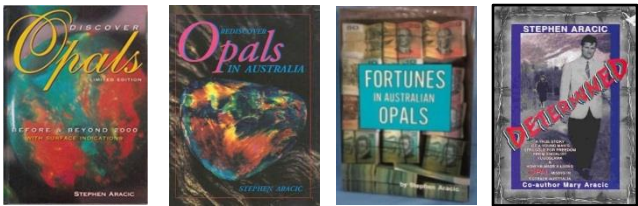
Shu Minoda and Joe Belica of Iris Opals, Anthony Melonus, Butch McFadden, Murray Kentwell and Bob Barrat also displayed some magnificent opal gems cut and polished, and also some enormous pieces of seam opals in the rough.

The Governor of N.S.W., the Honorable Marie Bashir, officially opened the 2013 Exhibition that was also held at the Dubbo Civic Centre in Darling Street.

On her arrival, Sue’s two granddaughters with Connor and Laura Wilcher, greeted the Governor and Lili presented a handmade card and a bouquet of Waratahs to the Governor, as they are her favorite flowers. Sue’s daughter, Teena, organised a delicious luncheon for the Governor and invited councilors and distinguished guests to attend.

Our thanks to the American Opal Society for their interest in Australian Opal that colours our world with love.

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

MAKING AN ANVIL STUMP

by Brad Smith

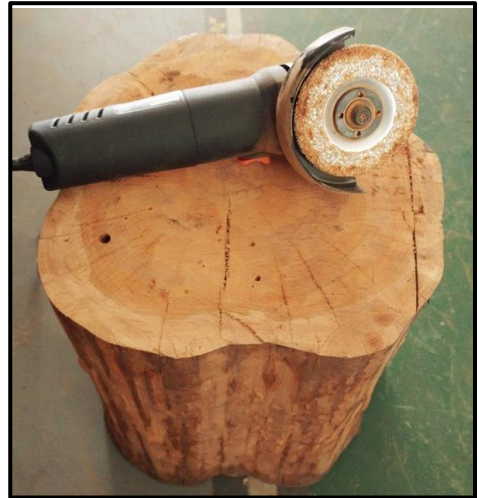
If you have a nice anvil, it needs be set on a solid base that's at a convenient height to work on. For several years I've been looking for a stump to make my anvil more accessible. Thanks to a friend, it finally happened last month. Here's how the project came together.



Luckily the piece of log was from a hardwood tree and had been aged to let it stabilize and dry out. First task was to remove all the bark which had already started to fall off.

For your stump to make a stable base for an anvil it must sit solidly on the ground, at an upright angle, and have a flat level top. That means the top and bottom surfaces need to be planar and at a 90 degree angle to the centerline of the trunk. That's rarely the case when you work with a piece of raw tree trunk, so the biggest challenge was how to true-up the saw cuts on the log with the rather simple tools that I had at my disposal.

I started by selecting which end I wanted for the bottom and then began flattening that surface. The job is probably quite simple if you have a large chain saw, but I only have a few small electric hand tools - a 5" circular saw and a 1/2" drill.



Luckily the local Harbor Freight was having a sale, and I had two gift cards. They didn't disappoint. I found a reasonable solution in their 4.5" angle grinder at a sale price of about \$15. Different discs let you cut, shape and sand materials like steel but there are also discs with heavy abrasive for use in carving wood. I bought the #58126 mushroom-shaped disc with really coarse grit - so coarse it's off the scale.

The abrasive disc made quick work of leveling the bottom of the stump. Be sure to wear goggles and dust mask if you try this. Chips fly fast and the dust is excessive. You'll want good quality safety gear that seals well.

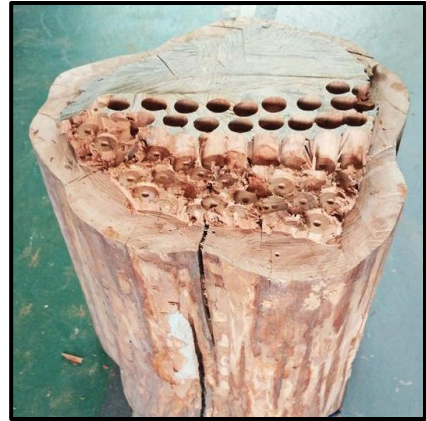
Continued on Page 7



Check for high points with a straightedge across the surface and mark high point with a felt pen for grinding. When you think you're done, invert the stump on a flat area of flooring and check to see if it stands firmly or still wobbles back and forth a bit.



With the bottom finished, I marked the top level surface all the way around the edge. This gave me a line to cut with the small power saw. Hammer and chisel helped to remove the saw-cut wood and exposed a margin of the final surface around the edges.

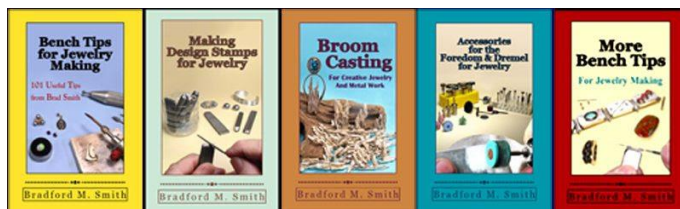


The remaining excess wood on the top was quite thick in spots and using the angle grinder was noisy, tedious, and slow. I found I could remove the thicker areas a lot faster by drilling a pattern of 1-inch holes than by grinding it off. But the grinder did a superior job at leveling the final quarter inch of surface.



Here's where I am now. It's usable but I still would like to wire brush and lightly sand the outside of the stump, and I need to fasten the anvil to the top.

Work Smarter & Be More Productive with Brad's "How To" Jewelry Books on [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.

August 5-7, 2022, Nipomo, CA

Orcutt Mineral Society

Nipomo High School, 525 N. Thompson Ave., Nipomo, CA 93444
54th Annual Rainbow of Gems Show & Sale – "OMS Rocks the Central Coast"

Hours: Friday & Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM

Contact: nipomocowgirl55@yahoo.com

Website: <http://omsinc.org>

August 6-7, 2022, Roseville, CA

Roseville Rock Rollers Gem and Mineral Society

@the Grounds, Roebbelen Event Center, 700 Event Center Dr., Roseville, CA 95678

Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM

Roseville Rock Rollers 60th Diamond Jubilee! Diamond give away each day, in the huge air-conditioned Event Center. Over 60 vendors, inside and outside, featuring: Crystals, Fossils, Minerals, Opal, Amethyst, Beads, Gemstones, Meteorites, Gold, and for Kids – "Education Station", Prospecting equipment, detectors and supplies, Petrified Wood, Stone carvings. Watch Demonstrations in the Lapidary Arts & bid on Silent Rock Auctions. Free – Scientific Mineral and Gem ID! Bring your Rocks, Gems, Minerals, for a no-cost Scientific Identification. Lots to see for adults and kids!

August 20-21, 2022 – Arcadia, CA

Pasadena Lapidary Society

"Inspiration Unearthed", 62nd Annual Tournament of Gems

Arcadia Masonic Center, 50 W. Duarte Rd., Arcadia

Hours: Saturday 10 AM- 6 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 5 PM

Contact: Ellen Ferrell 1-727-512-0381

Email: ellenbf2007@aol.com

Website: <https://www.pasadenalapidary.org>

August 20-21, 2022 – Tehachapi, CA

Tehachapi Valley Gem and Mineral Show

500 East "F" Street, Tehachapi, CA

Hours: 9 AM – 5 PM

Rocks, Minerals, Fossils, Beads, Gifts, Collectables, Gemstones and Jewelry

Dealer inquiries accepted. For information contact Ron Myrick, E-Mail: travis462@outlook.com (661) 972-1117 or Robert Papac:

getback@csurfers.net (661) 342-5589

Contact: email: getback@csurfers.net

Website: <http://tvqgms.org>

September 10-11, 2022, Reno, NV

The Reno Gem & Mineral Society, Inc.

Jackpot of Gems

Reno Convention Center, 4390 S. Virginia, Reno, NV 89502

Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM

Contact: sailondan55@aol.com

Website: <http://www.renogms.org>

September 17-18, 2022 – Chico, CA

Feather River Lapidary and Mineral Society

Silver Dollar Fairgrounds, 2757 Fair St., Chico, CA 95928

Hours Saturday 9 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 9 AM – 4 PM

There will be 40 dealers, Silent Auction, Geode Cracking, Treasure Hunt, Spinning Wheel and other activities

Contact: (530) 586-7052, mmpg@att.net

Website: <http://featherriverrocks.org>

September 24-25, 2022 – San Luis Obispo, CA

San Luis Obispo Gem and Mineral Club

San Luis Obispo Veterans Memorial Building, 801 Grand Ave., San Luis Obispo, CA

Hours both days: 10 AM – 5 PM

Contact: 2022show@alogem.org

Website: <http://www.slogem.org/show.htm>

September 24-25, 2022 – Long Beach, CA

Long Beach Mineral and Gem Society

Gems on the Hill Show

Signal Hill Public Library, Signal Point Terrace and Community Room

1800 E. Hill St., Signal Hill, CA 90755

Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM

Free event, Children's activities

Contact: 562 253-1390, karin.yasuda@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.facebook.com/LBMGS>

October 1-2, 2022 – Anderson, CA

Shasta Gem & Mineral Society

Shasta District Fair and Event Center, 1890 Briggs St., Anderson, CA (just south of Redding) 96007

Hours: Saturday 9 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 9 AM – 4 PM

Shasta Gem & Mineral Society is having its 66th Annual Gem & Mineral Show. Vendors come from the West Coast and will be selling gems, minerals, jewelry, crystals, rocks and fossils. Door prizes, rock auctions and great educational and spectacular displays.

Contact: miller3987@gmail.com

Website: <http://shastagemandmineral.org>

October 8-9, 2022 – Los Altos, CA

Peninsula Gem and Geology Society

Los Altos, CA 94022

Hours: Saturday and Sunday 10 AM – 5 PM

Recreation with Rocks

Contact: 650 575-3144

Website: <http://pggs.org>

October 9, 2022 – Fallbrook, CA

Fallbrook Gem and Mineral Society

Fall Festival of Gems & Minerals

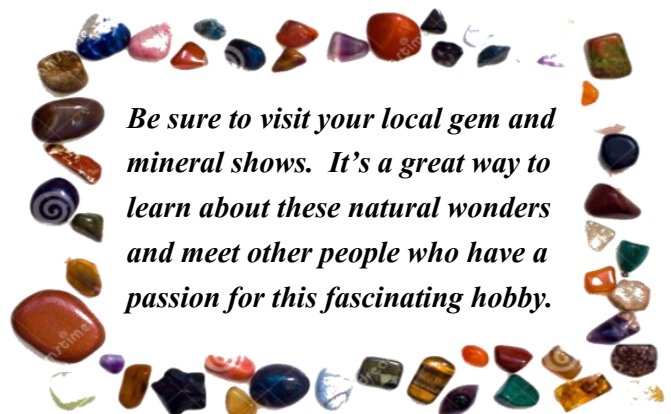
123 W. Alvarado Street, Fallbrook CA 92028

Hours: 9 AM-4 PM

Vendors: apply by August 1, 2022. Free booths for nonprofit organizations promoting minerals, fossils or gems.

Contact: (760) 728-1130, info@fgms.org

Website: <http://www.fgms.org>



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.

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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
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Volume 55, Issue 8

— 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



Meeting
August 18th at 7 p.m.
Anaheim Community Center

TO:



General Meeting Location at:

Anaheim Downtown Community Center

250 E. Center Street
Anaheim, CA 92805

**Next meeting will be August 18th, at 7:00 p.m. at
the Anaheim Downtown Community Center**

American Opal Society

Website: <http://OpalSociety.org>
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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AmericanOpalSociety>
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YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCegTIH1IEyO7y8wdqVRfyUA?view_as=subscriber

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