

THE OPAL EXPRESS

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President's Message

Happy Thanksgiving Opalholics!

Normally in November I would be inviting all of you to come to the Opal Show, but unfortunately circumstances have prevented us from having a 2022 show.

But we're working very hard to make sure that we have a show for November 2023! As progress is made, we will fill you in on the details. I can tell you that we will have a new venue for the show, but not all the details have been worked out. Stay tuned for details!

I hope everyone has a great Thanksgiving and don't eat too much turkey and pumpkin pie!

Stan McCall
AOS President
Custom Creative Gem Cutting



Fun Facts About Thanksgiving

The first Thanksgiving was celebrated in 1621 over a three day harvest festival. It included 50 Pilgrims, 90 Wampanoag Indians, and lasted three days. It is believed by historians that only five women were present.

Turkey wasn't on the menu at the first Thanksgiving. Venison, duck, goose, oysters, lobster, eel, and fish were likely served, alongside pumpkins and cranberries (but not pumpkin pie or cranberry sauce!).

Abraham Lincoln proclaimed Thanksgiving a national holiday on October 3, 1863. Sarah Josepha Hale, the woman who wrote "Mary Had A Little Lamb," convinced Lincoln to make Thanksgiving a national holiday after writing letters for 17 years.

There are four towns in the United States named "Turkey." They can be found in Arizona, Texas, Louisiana and North Carolina.

The average number of calories consumed on Thanksgiving is 4,500.

Butterball answers more than 100,000 turkey-cooking questions via their Butterball Turkey Hotline each November and December.

The tradition of football on Thanksgiving began in 1876 with a game between Yale and Princeton. The first NFL games were played on Thanksgiving in 1920.

Gem Chrysocolla

Chalcedony infused with neon colored copper minerals

From <http://www.vgems.net>

The date was May 1, 1893. As darkness fell on the World Exposition, President Grover Cleveland pushed a button providing electricity to one hundred thousand incandescent lamps, illuminating the entire fairgrounds for the first time. This “City of Light” was the brainchild of Nikola Tesla working for Westinghouse, and it marked a turning point in the battle between Thomas Edison’s direct current and Tesla’s alternating current. From that time on, more than 80 percent of all electrical devices ordered in the United States were for alternating current.

As consumers demanded more and more electrical devices made with copper wire, the demand for copper ore skyrocketed and the mining industry responded. Mines across the country that had previously ignored copper in the pursuit of gold and silver, suddenly discovered a new source of revenue. For gem and mineral collectors, the result was an increased supply of the green and blue minerals associated with copper ore. Two of the more recognizable minerals are malachite and turquoise, but there are well over 100 minerals containing copper.



Gem Silica Cabochon

Prices for gem silica can easily reach \$50 to \$100 a carat, with high grade material selling for over \$200 a carat. A top grade specimen would be distinguished by good translucency, consistent and strong color saturation, and the absence of inclusions

The mineral we are interested in here is chrysocolla, a hydrated copper silicate with formula $(\text{Cu},\text{Al})_2\text{H}_2\text{Si}_2\text{O}_5(\text{OH})_4 \cdot n\text{H}_2\text{O}$. (Try to say that three times fast!) This bluish-green mineral forms as botryoidal or rounded masses and crusts, or vein fillings in copper ore, and it is usually found mixed with malachite, cuprite and azurite.

Its neon colors make it an extremely attractive mineral specimen. Unfortunately its hardness of 2.5 to 3.5 makes it too soft for use in jewelry. Fortunately, there have been some instances where the chrysocolla combines with chalcedony quartz resulting in a durable and beautiful gemstone known as gem silica, or gem chrysocolla. The most prolific source for gem chrysocolla was Arizona, and the two top producers were the Ray Mine and the Inspiration Mine. Unfortunately neither mine has produced for over twenty years so the majority of gem silica in the market today is coming from collections. As modern methods of mining become more automated, it is increasingly difficult to stop operations and extract gem chrysocolla if it is encountered. There are still some pick and shovel mining operations that produce small quantities of gem chrysocolla, most notably in Peru.



Gem Silica Rough, Arizona; Despite the names chrysocolla chalcedony and gem silica chrysocolla, gem silica is not really a form of chrysocolla. Its only connection with chrysocolla is that both minerals are colored by the same copper salts. So the names can be confusing. In fact gem silica is a form of chalcedony, the microcrystalline variety of quartz.

Continued on Page 3

The name chrysocolla comes from the Greek words chrysos meaning gold and kolla meaning glue. The name was first used by Theophrastus in 315BC as the name of material used to solder gold. Ironically, as scientists continue to study ancient gold artifacts the latest data indicates that the material was probably a cadmium sulfide known as greenockite instead of chrysocolla!



Gem Chrysocolla with flecks of green malachite in chalcedony. Mined back in the 1950s in Arizona’s Miami/Globe region. From: www.gerardscottdesigns.com

Since chrysocolla is almost always found with other copper minerals, desirable local mixes are often given specific trade names. Perhaps the two most well-known are Parrot Wing jasper, and Eilat stone. Eilat stone is a variegated blue and green mixture of chrysocolla, malachite, turquoise and other copper minerals found on the Gulf of Aqaba, near the northwestern end of the Red Sea. Parrot Wing jasper is a copper mineral mix that featured a neon green color with red, brown, darker green, and blue mixed in. The original deposit was mined in the 1980s near Sinaloa, Mexico, but is no longer available.

Since both of these materials are mixes, copper minerals from all over the globe frequently get substituted and it is virtually impossible to prove or disprove origin.

Did You Know?

Chrysocolla is the gentlest of stones. It's not a high-energy stone like quartz, rutilated quartz, or smoky quartz and, unlike malachite, azurite and lapis, it doesn't bring buried emotions to the surface. Its main role is to soothe, calm and inspire.

Chrysocolla is actually part of a small group of copper-bearing gems. Other gemstones within this group include azurite, malachite and cuprite. This gemstone has a propensity to mix with other minerals. Pure chrysocolla is quite rare.

The gemstone Chrysocolla is often confused with turquoise. It is a copper bearing mineral found wherever copper deposits occur especially in areas of the southwestern USA, Chili, Zaire, Australia, France and England.

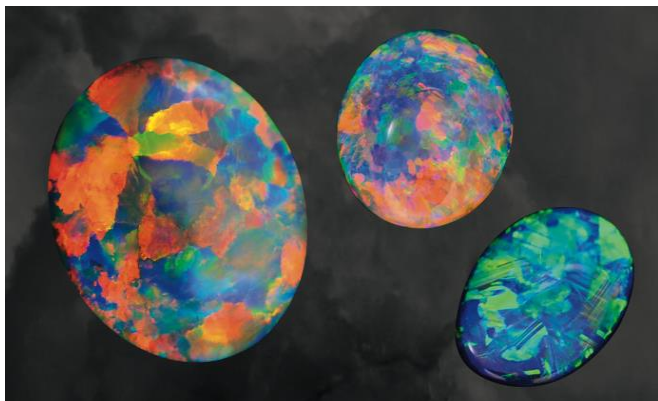
Pure chrysocolla is too soft for jewelry purposes but it is often found in quartz deposits which makes it hard enough to polish for cabochons. It is often found mixed with malachite, turquoise and azurite.

Chrysocolla is associated with tranquility and peace, intuition, patience, and unconditional love. It is thought to offer gentle and soothing qualities.

Sources: Google
www.bernardine.com/gemstones/chrysocolla.htm

The Art of Opal Cutting

07 October 2010



Images from Cody Opal Australia

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

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

Opal is such a mysterious gemstone that often its beautiful play of colour is hidden. Only an experienced opal cutter can produce an exquisite gemstone. So the opal cutter is an artisan of great importance, who alone can reveal an opal's hidden beauty. So how does an opal cutter begin? An examination of the rough is key, as the origin and variety of opal will often determine what a cutter does; in this way opal is like no other gemstone.

A cutter working on a Lightning Ridge (NSW) black opal will require a different skill to a cutter who is about to produce a gem from Queensland boulder opal, who again will treat the rough material differently to the cutter of a superb South Australian Andamooka or Coober Pedy crystal opal. and so on).

Each variety possesses its own unique challenge for the cutter in terms of the thickness of the opal and the material that forms the back of the gem (ironstone for boulder, black potch for black opal,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Opal folklore is as vibrant as the stone; unique to Australia and to the outback regions of Australian pioneers from the 19th century. As world renowned Australian opal expert Len Cram says, "Opal is like gold, once the fever is in your blood you can never get it out". Any opal cutter knows how right he is.

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

Catching On to Cacholong

A little known opal gets a new
taste of the limelight

by Darren Arnold
October 2003

Even in the wide and varied world of gemstones, cacholong is pretty obscure. While it's been known to the gem community for years, your average consumer is more likely to respond to the mention of cacholong with a polite "gesundheit!" The stone has certainly generated its share of confusion. Also known as kascholong, the stone is actually a variety of opal, but this hasn't stopped it from being listed as an agate on more than one occasion. It has also been described as either chalcedony or hydrophane opal. The fact that it is sometimes known as "mother of pearl opal" only adds to the complexity.



Photo courtesy of: www.gpliptica.ru

Cacholong is generally milky white in color, and this neutrality means that the stone is very versatile. It's also extremely porous (hence the confusion with hydrophane opal), and this absorbent nature makes it highly suitable for perfume stones. It has a Mohs hardness of 6, making it easily carved or inlaid.

The stone is found in a number of places in Austria and the countries formerly known as Mongolia and Czechoslovakia, to name a few.

However, much of the cacholong bought and sold in the world today is sourced from Russia and countries that border that massive nation.

The stone is thought to be named after the Cach River, today known as the Kashkadarja a River in the Bukhara province of Uzbekistan, which has long been associated with deposits of cacholong.

Cacholong seems to have initially come to prominence through a number of Russian works of art in the mid to late 1800s, and Emperor Nicholas II commissioned a series of Cossack figurines that featured the stone.

A walk through the world famous Hermitage museum in St. Petersburg gives visitors an idea of how the stone was used in 19th century Russian art, especially by the nation's famed mosaicists. One might see, for example, a cacholong daffodil set on a nephrite stem, or a mahogany cabinet with a mosaic of a tropical forest that features cacholong alongside jasper, lapis, and other stones.

Continued on Page 6

One of the Russian artisans whose work is housed in the Hermitage is Oleg Galatin, who has used cacholong in his "glyptic" carving work with cameos and intaglios. Galatin carries on the work of his Russian ancestors, continuing to bring this obscure stone to life.

Until recently, artisans like Galatin were the only ones who used cacholong in jewelry, and their work was highly traditional. Cacholong also tended to play a supporting role in jewelry or objects of art rather than being the main attraction.

All that began to change in late 2002 and early 2003 as some of Europe's most prominent jewelry companies began to feature cacholong in their jewelry. Leading the way was fashion icon Chanel, which launched its new haute joaillerie collection in early 2003. Cacholong enjoys a high profile in the new designs, being used along with onyx to create carved camellias, Chanel's trademark. This collection neatly demonstrates the versatility of the stone, as cacholong is used both in a more traditional secondary manner for example, on diamond earrings yet takes on a central role as the main stone in a gold ring or necklace.

Picking up on this cue, other jewelry makers have begun using cacholong in everything from beads and rings carved from the stone to jewelry set with carved cacholong. The stone is especially popular in jewelry with a black and white color scheme, where especially cut pieces of cacholong replace the more fragile white enamel.

Whether the stone's sudden popularity will have any longevity is another question. Cacholong is difficult to get,

and prices can vary depending on the supplier. While Chanel is about as good a springboard into the jewelry market as any stone could expect, fashion is fleeting even for better known gemstones. If high end jewelers abandon the stone, it's most likely to fade back into obscurity.

If, on the other hand, the current spark of interest brings more cacholong onto the market especially given the popularity of Art Deco style jewelry with carved stones it could be just the boost this Russian classic needs to find a new market niche.

From [Tip's From The Jeweler's Bench Library:](http://www.ganoksin.com/borisat/nenam/cacholong.htm)
<http://www.ganoksin.com/borisat/nenam/cacholong.htm>

What is a Cameo?

A cameo is a form of glyptography, or bas-relief, carving, which historically features landscapes, portraits, and mythological figures cut into a variety of materials, but most often into glass, hardstones and shells. Cameo artworks were crafted to create two layers on one piece of material, the top of which protruded from its background, creating a multi-dimensional artwork. These detailed reliefs were often used to adorn pieces of jewelry, such as brooches, necklaces, bracelets, and rings. The earliest cameos took inspiration from prehistoric petroglyphs, which documented important religious and symbolic iconography onto rock faces.

Source:
<http://mymodernmet.com/history-of-cameo-jewelry/>

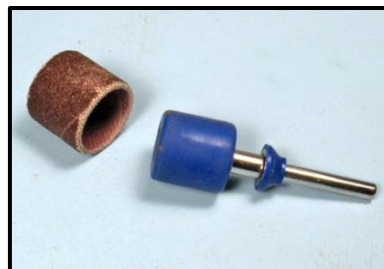
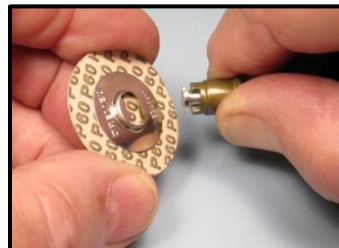
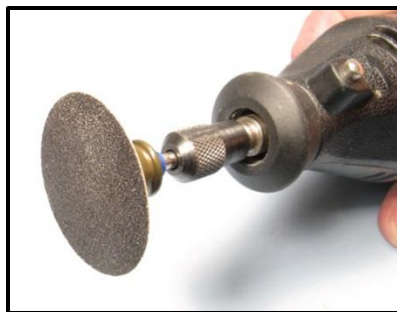
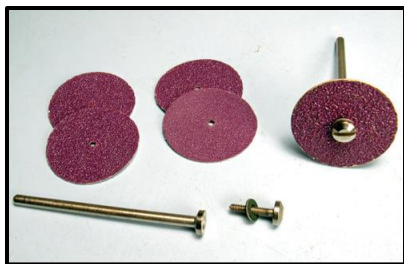
~ Bench Tips ~

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

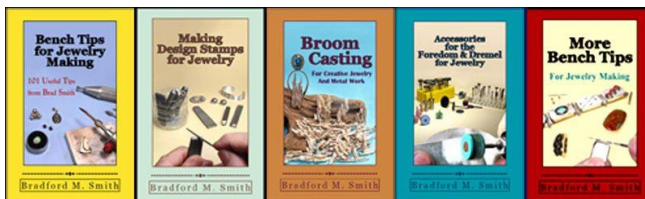
SANDING TOOLS

by Brad Smith

We all have our favorite sanding tools for the Foredom or Dremel to speed up the task of finishing a piece of metalwork. Abrasive finishing is fast and economical. But there are a lot of different ones to choose from, and it's not clear which one is best for each job.



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.

November 6, 2022 – Mason, NV

Mason Valley Gem & Mineral Club

55 Bridge St., Mason, NV

Time: 1 PM – till over

This event will be held at the VFW Hall in Mason, NV. Do not turn on Bridge St. in YERINGTON. See the map on the flyer.

LIVE AUCTION! Geodes, Petrified Wood, Rocks, Slabs, Minerals, Cabochons, and other lapidary crafts. Cash or Check only

Contact: srheid@usa.net

November 6, 2022 – Lake Elsinore, CA

Lake Elsinore Gem & Mineral Society

32097 Corydon Road, Lake Elsinore, CA 92530

Hours: 10 AM – 4 PM

Winter Festival Rock & Craft Show

Contact: Berylman50@aol.com

Find us on Facebook

November 19-20, 2022 – Santa Cruz, CA

Santa Cruz Mineral and Gem Society

Santa Cruz Live Oak Grange, 1900 17th Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95062

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

Santa Cruz Holiday Sale – Rocks, Minerals, Gems, Fossils, Jewelry

Contact: (831) 459-0572, scrucmgms@gmail.com

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

2023

February 18-19, 2023 – Antioch, CA 94509

Antioch Lapidary Club

Contra Costa County Fairgrounds, 1201 West 10th St. Antioch, CA 94509

Hours: 10 AM to 5 PM Saturday and Sunday

Jewelry, Gems, Findings, Supplies, Auction, Grab Bags, Exhibits and hands on projects for kids

Contact: (925) 301-6957, edysnyder@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.antiochlapidaryclub.com>

February 25-26, 2023 – Vallejo, CA

Vallejo Gem and Mineral Society

Solano County Fairgrounds, McCormack Hall, 900 Fairgrounds Drive, Vallejo, CA 94589

Hours: 10 AM-5 PM

Gems, geodes, fossils, beads and minerals from around the globe.

Discover lapidary and stone crafts from vendors and live demonstrations. Something for everyone! Silent auction, geode cuttings, and games of chance and discovery for kids!

Contact: (415) 254-1506, ddahonvgms@gmail.com

Website: <http://vjgems.co/>

March 4-5, 2023 – Ventura, CA

Ventura Gem & Mineral Society

Ventura County Fairgrounds, 10 W. Harbor Blvd., Ventura, CA 93001

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

50 exhibits of gems, minerals, fossils and lapidary arts; ongoing demos of lapidary and jewelry making; raffle prizes & silent auctions; a Second-Hand Treasures Store & plant sale; 15 dealers; children's activities and free resources for teachers. A SoCal tradition for 6 decades and counting!

Contact: (805) 312-8467, info@vgms.org

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

March 3, 4 & 5, 2023, Newark, CA

Mineral and Gem Society of Castro Valley

Newark Pavilion, 6430 Thornton Ave., Newark, CA

Times: Friday and Saturday, 10 AM – 6 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 5 PM

MGSCV Annual Show. 40+ dealers, display cases, demonstrations, door prizes. Sunday auction of donated items from society members.

Fluorescent displays and dealers. Free parking.

Contact: Showchair@mgscv.org

Website: <http://MGSCV.org>

March 10-12, 2023 – Stoddard Wells

Victor Valley Gem and Mineral Club

47th Annual Stoddard Wells Rockhound Tailgate

Time: Friday, Saturday & Sunday – 9 AM – 5 PM

Come visit us and our vendors for Handcrafted and Faceted Jewelry, Slabs and Cabs, Findings, and Equipment, Minerals and Fossils. TONS of Rough Material and More

Contact: (909) 657-7200, marklantz53@gmail.com

Club Address: 15056B Seventh St., Victorville, CA 92395

Phone: (760) 243-2330 and leave a message. Email:

president@vvgmc.org

Website: <http://vvgmc.org>

Tailgate-2023-Info.jpg

March 11-12, 2023 -Turlock, CA

Mother Lode Mineral Society

Stanislaus County Fairgrounds, 900 N. Broadway, Turlock, CA

Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 5 PM

Admission: Adults \$8, 12 & under free w/paid adult

Parking: Free

Activities: Jewelry, Beads, Tools, Educational Exhibits, Demonstrations, Fossil Exhibit, Sharks, Fluorescent room, Speakers, Geode Cutting, Dinosaur Walk-about, Gold Panning, Gem & Mineral Identification. Chat with Paleontologist Neal Larson, Large Fluorescent Room, Kids Activities, Rock Sale – old collections, Earth Science Tables, Food Court, Gemstone & Fossil Dig bags, Raffle, 45 Dealers

Website: <http://www.turlockgemshow.com> or

<http://www.motherlodemineralsociety.com>

March 18-19, 2023 – Lemoore, CA

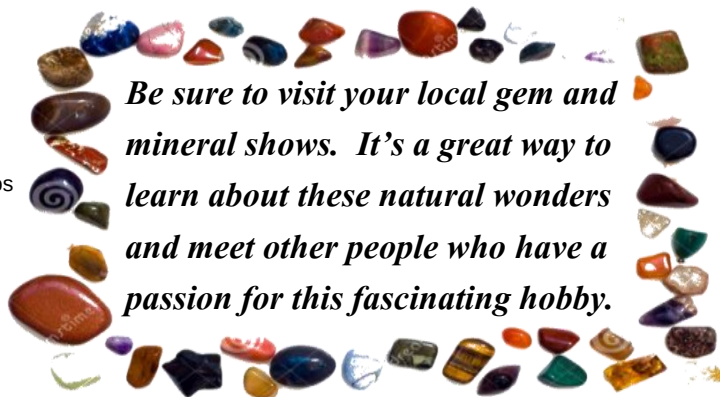
Lemoore Gem & Mineral Club

Trinity Hall, 470 Champion St., Lemoore, CA

Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 6 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM

Featuring gems and minerals from around the world! Fossils, Jewelry, Beads, Stone Carvings, Lapidary Rough, Geode Cutting, and Artesian Jewelry.

Website: <https://facebook.com/AndLemoore>



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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CITY	STATE
ZIP OR POSTAL CODE	COUNTRY (IF OUTSIDE USA)
PHONE - Home ()	PHONE - Business ()
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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

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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 11

— 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
November 17th at 7 p.m.
Anaheim Community Center



General Meeting Location at:

Anaheim Downtown Community Center

250 E. Center Street
Anaheim, CA 92805

**Next meeting will be Thursday, November 17th, at
7:00 p.m. at the Anaheim Downtown Community Center**

American Opal Society

Website: <http://OpalSociety.org>
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