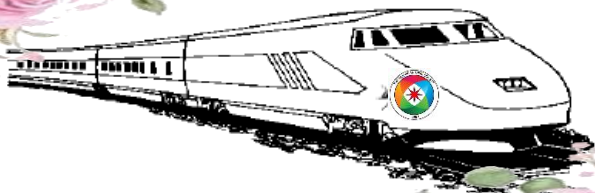


The Opal Express

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Fun Facts About Spring

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President's Message

Happy Spring and Easter Opalholics!

Have you ever seen so much rain before in Southern California? If we get any more rain, we may have to build an Ark at our next meeting!

Things are taking shape for our Opal show in October. Vendor contracts will be going out soon, so keep an eye out for the email if you want to have a booth. We will also need volunteers, so please think about volunteering to help out your club!

There will be an April meeting at the Downtown Anaheim Community Center on Thursday, April 20th, starting at 7:00 p.m. Hope to see you there!

Stan McCall
AOS President
Custom Creative Gem Cutting

- ❖ The first day of spring is called the vernal equinox. The term *vernal* is Latin for "spring" and *equinox* is Latin for "equal night."
- ❖ On the first day of spring, a person at the North Pole would see the sun skimming across the horizon, beginning six months of uninterrupted daylight. A person at the South Pole would see the sun skimming across the horizon, signaling the start of six months of darkness.
- ❖ The first spring flowers are typically lilacs, irises, lilies, tulips, daffodils, and dandelions.
- ❖ Easter always falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox.
- ❖ For the Japanese, the opening of the cherry blossom, Japan's national flower, in March or April signals the start of spring.
- ❖ In China, the coming of spring coincides with celebrations for the Chinese New Year. The holiday falls on the first day of the first lunar month, in January or February. Groundhog day has its roots in an ancient seasonal festival.

Source: <https://www.bamsi.org/general-discussion/fun-facts-about-spring/>



New State Gemstone: Mississippi Opal Represents “Unique Geological History”

by Howard Cohen
8 March 2023



It's the only naturally occurring gemstone in the state.

On Friday, Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves signed into law a bill designating the Mississippi Opal as the Magnolia State's official gemstone.

On Twitter, the Governor posted two photos captioned with the proclamation, “Mississippi officially has a state gemstone! I was happy to sign legislation declaring it to be the beautiful Mississippi Opal, the only naturally occurring gemstone in our state.”

The state's First Lady, Elee Reeves, is seen modeling a Mississippi Opal pendant in one of the pics. The governor's tweet emphasized his wife's support in ferrying the legislation through the state's House and Senate, where the bills passed unanimously.



“The green Mississippi Opal is as beautiful as our state and it will be an excellent representation of our unique geological history,” noted Governor Reeves. “Thank you to our First Lady and the folks at the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality for working to elevate this issue.”

“There's no doubt that Mississippi is home to lovely people, places, and natural resources,” First Lady Reeves said. “I'm incredibly excited to have the Mississippi Opal as our official state gemstone. This gem is a perfect example of the beauty found in the state we love.”

Geologist James Starnes is credited with discovering the Mississippi Opal less than 20 years ago when he and his team at the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) were mapping the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River in Claiborne County, near Vicksburg.

Continued on Page 3

The geologists believe Mississippi Opal was formed millions of years ago from volcanic ash. The gem is unique because it displays opal-like flashes ranging from red to orange to green.

The bill's expedited run through Mississippi's legislature — and its ultimate signing by the governor — is attributed to the combined efforts of the MDEQ, the North Mississippi Gem and Mineral Society, the Mississippi State Board of Registered Professional Geologists and Mississippi's First Lady.

The bill emphasized how the designation of the Mississippi Opal as the state's official gemstone would encourage pride in the state's rich natural heritage.

Starnes believes the Mississippi Opal's elevated status will “encourage folks to take interest in the state's geology.”

Specimens of Mississippi Opal are currently available for public viewing at both the Museum of the Mississippi Delta in Greenwood and the Oren Dunn City Museum in Tupelo.

Source: https://instoremag.com/new-state-gemstone-mississippi-opal-represents-unique-geological-history/?utm_source=omeda&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Other+Communications&utm_term=&utm_content=IS+Weekly+Top+Stories&oly_enc_id=3825F3637790E9X

Fun Fact

The Mississippi Opal was found in Claiborne County in the Catahoula Formation by MDEQ geologists in 2004 while doing routine mapping work for the State Geological Survey.

57,000 Carat Emerald, Called “World's Largest,” Up for Auction

by Rob Bates, Senior Editor, JCK
18 January 2012



What is being described as the “world's largest cut emerald” is being auctioned in Canada by Kelowna-based Western Star Auctions on Jan. 25.

The 57,500 ct. oval stone weighs around 25 pounds and is the “size of a watermelon,” Western Star Auctions owner Mike Odenbach tells JCK.

The stone, named Teodora (or “God's Gift”), has been appraised at \$1.15 million, but Odenbach thinks it will sell for far more. The company plans to post a grading report later today, Odenbach says.

Regan Reaney, the Calgary gem wholesaler who brought the gem to the auction house, says it was found in somewhere in Brazil and cut in India. A gemologist, Jeff Nechka, owner of Premier Gems, who examined the “forest green” stone dubbed it natural but “slightly treated.”

We are sure it is of the beryl family,” Nechka says. “It has definitely been treated but we are not sure how much it has been treated. It's impressive someone was even able to cut something like that.” Reaney says the stone has a “stunning” aura.”

“I wish it were translucent—then it would be a billion-dollar stone,” he says. “But we took it to a jewelry store and they were just blown away by this. Even the gemologist, when he picked this up, he was like a kid at Christmas. His eyes just lit up. There aren't enough words in the English language to describe this.”

Reaney says that while there have been bigger rough emeralds, this is thought to be the largest cut stone. “It's a real showpiece,” he says. “Just a wow.”

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

Far Out: Ancient Egyptian Jewelry Came from Outer Space

by Denise Chow, Staff Writer
August 19, 2013

Ancient Egyptian beads found in a 5,000-year-old tomb were made from iron meteorites that fell to Earth from space, according to a new study. The beads, which are the oldest known iron artifacts in the world, were crafted roughly 2,000 years before Egypt's Iron Age.

In 1911, nine tube-shaped beads were excavated from an ancient cemetery near the village of el-Gerzeh, which is located south of Cairo, said study lead author Thilo Rehren, a professor at UCL Qatar, a Western Asian outpost of the University College London's Institute of Archaeology. The tomb dates back to approximately 3200 B.C., the researchers said.

Inside the tomb, which belonged to a teenage boy, the iron beads were strung together into a necklace alongside other exotic materials, including gold and gemstones. Early tests of the beads' composition revealed curiously high concentrations of nickel, a telltale signature of iron meteorites.



Meteoric iron beads (center) are pictured between ancient Egyptian necklaces that are strung with tube-shaped lapis lazuli (blue), carnelian (brownish/red), agate, and gold beads. Credit: UCL Petrie Museum/Rob Eagle

"Even 100 years ago, [the beads] attracted attention as being something strange," Rehren told LiveScience.

But without definitive proof of the beads' cosmic origins, questions persisted over whether similar amounts of nickel could be present in human-made iron. By scanning the iron beads with beams of neutrons and gamma rays, the researchers found high concentrations of cobalt, phosphorous and germanium; these elements were present at levels that only occur in iron meteorites.

"It's really exciting, because we were able to detect sufficient cobalt and germanium in these beads to confirm they're meteoritic," Rehren said. "We had assumed this was the case for 100 years, but it's nice to be able to put an exclamation mark on the label, rather than a question mark."

The X-ray technology also revealed that the beads had been hammered into thin sheets before being meticulously rolled into tubes.

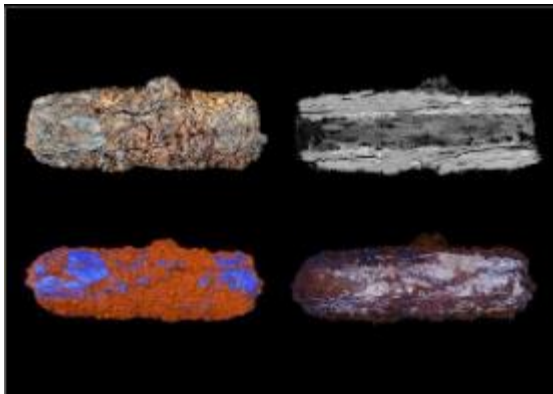
"This meteoritic iron, it's very hard material that you find in lumps, and yet here we see it in thin beads," Rehren said. "The real question is, how were they made?"

Unlike softer and more pliable metals like gold and copper, working with solid iron required the invention of blacksmithing, which involves repeatedly heating metals to red-hot temperatures and hammering them into shape.

Continued on Page 5

The researchers suggest the iron meteorites were heated and hammered into thin sheets, and then woven around wooden sticks to create 0.8-inch-long (2 centimeters), tube-shaped beads. Other stones found in the same tomb displayed more traditional stone-working techniques, such as carving and drilling.

This shows that these people, at this early age, were capable of blacksmithing," Rehren said. "It shows a pretty advanced skill with this difficult material. It might not have been on large scales, but by the time of the Iron Age, they had about 2,000 years of experience working with meteoritic iron."



An analysis of this Gerzeh bead showed it was crafted from a space rock.

This is not the first time beads from this Egyptian tomb have been linked to the cosmos. Earlier this year, in May, researchers at the Open University and

University of Manchester published a paper in the journal *Meteoritics and Planetary Science* about the celestial origins of the ancient beads.

Other researchers have identified different artifacts that also have space origins. Last year, German scientists discovered a Buddha statue that was carved from a meteorite between the eighth and 10th centuries.

The detailed findings of the new study were published online today (August 19) in the *Journal of Archaeological Science*.

Follow Denise Chow on Twitter @denisechow.
Follow LiveScience @livescience, Facebook &
Google+. Original article on LiveScience.

From <http://www.livescience.com-from-meteorites.html>

* * * * *

Fun Facts About Meteorites

The oldest particles in a meteorite, calcium-aluminum-rich inclusions from carbonaceous chondrites, have been dated at 4.56 billion years old. Meteorites that originate from asteroids are all ~ 4.5 billion years old. Meteorites that originate from the Moon range in age from 4.5 to 2.9 billion years old.

<https://meteorites.asu.edu/meteorites/meteorite-facts>

* * * * *

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ocfair.com/imaginology

~ 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

MOBILE FOREDOM STAND

by Brad Smith

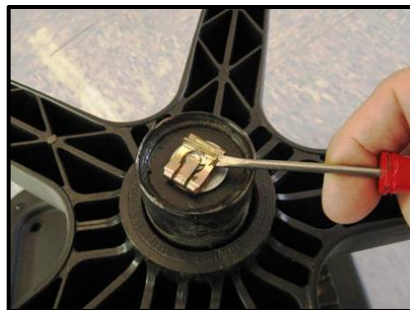
A handy mobile stand for your flexshaft can be made easily and quickly from the base of an old swivel office chair. This lets you easily move the Foredom around in the shop or if space is a premium, store it away when not in use.

You can find these chairs being thrown out at office buildings and schools. I just asked the custodian in my building to set one aside for me.

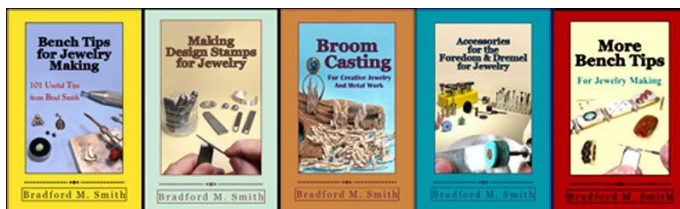
To separate the chair from the wheeled base, simply remove the spring clip from the center bottom. I use a small screwdriver or a pair of pliers.

To make the stand, you'll need two pieces of threaded galvanized steel pipe and a pipe fitting from a hardware store. The first length of pipe is 3/4 inch diameter to fit the hole in most chair bases. The second piece is a length of less expensive 1/2 inch pipe.

The total length of the two pipes should be five feet. I used a two foot length of 3/4 pipe and a three foot length of 1/2 pipe. They are joined together by a pipe fitting called a 3/4 to 1/2 reducing coupler.



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.

April 1-2, 2023 – Vista, CA

Vista Gem and Mineral Society
Antique Gas and Steam Engine Museum, 2040 N. Santa Fe Ave.,
Vista, CA 92083
Hours: Saturday 10 AM - 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM
Cabs, Slabs and Rough, Jewelry
Website: <https://vistarocks.org>

April 8-9, 2023 – Mariposa, CA

Mariposa Gem and Mineral Show
Mariposa County Fairgrounds, 5007 Fairgrounds Rd., Mariposa, CA
Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM
Contact: mgmc@sti.net
Website: <http://mariposagemclub.org>

April 15-16, 2023 – Placerville, CA

El Dorado County Mineral and Gem Society
El Dorado County Fairgrounds, 100 Placerville Dr., Placerville, CA
Hours: Saturday and Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM
Treasures in the Rough
Contact: office@edcmgs
Website: <http://edcmgs.org>

April 22-23, 2023 – Thousand Oaks, CA

Conejo Gem & Mineral Club
Borchard Park, 190 N. Reino Rd., Thousand Oaks, CA
Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM
46th Pageant of a Thousand Gems
Jewelry, Gems, Minerals, Fossils, Rocks, Hobby Supplies, Exhibits,
Demonstrations, Door Prizes, Silent Auction, Plant Sales and Youth
Activities
Free Admission and Free Parking
Contact: conejogemandmineral@gmail.com, mrmikerh@gmail.com
Website: <https://cgamc.org>

April 22-23, 2023 – Santa Cruz, CA

Santa Cruz Mineral and Gem Society
Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium, 307 Church Street, Santa Cruz, CA
95060
Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 QAM – 4 PM
The show features displays, fun activities, and loads of rocks,
minerals, crystals, gems, jewelry, and lapidary arts for sale.
Browse the bargains and pick up some great gifts. That's April 29th
and 30th at the Civic in downtown Santa Cruz.
Contact: scruzmgs@gmail.com
Website: <http://www.scrockngem.org>

April 29-30, 2023 – Anaheim, CA

Anaheim Searchers Gem & Mineral Society
Brookhurst Community Center, 2271 W. Crescent Ave.,
Anaheim CA
Contact: nancybird68@gmail.com
Website: <https://www.searchersrocks.org/>

May 5-6, 2023 – Yucaipa

Yucaipa Valley Gem and Mineral Society
Yucaipa Blvd at Adams Street, Yucaipa, CA 92399
Hours: Friday 6 PM – 10 PM, Saturday Noon to 10 PM
Our annual show will have 15 dealers, kids activities, geode
cracker, club store, and great raffle. Held in conjunction with city's
Yucaipa Music and Arts Festival which will include artisan and
other vendors, kids rides, music, food and beer/wine garden.
Attendance and parking are free. Festival and show is held along
Yucaipa Blvd. This is a great event for everyone in the family.
Contact: grandpasgems@gmail.com
Website: <https://www.yvgms.org/>

May 6-7, 2023 – Lancaster, CA

Antelope Valley Gem and Mineral Club
Antelope Valley Fairgrounds, 2551 West Ave. H, Lancaster, CA
93536
Hours: Saturday & Sunday 10 AM – 5 PM
We will have lots of vendors, displays and activities for individuals
and families. We look forward to seeing you there.
Admission and Parking are free. Please note that dogs are only
allowed if they are Service Animals.
Contact: marylandoriole@gmail.com
Website: <http://avgem.weebly.com>
[flyer: antelopeshow](#)

June 3-4, 2023 – Jackson, CA

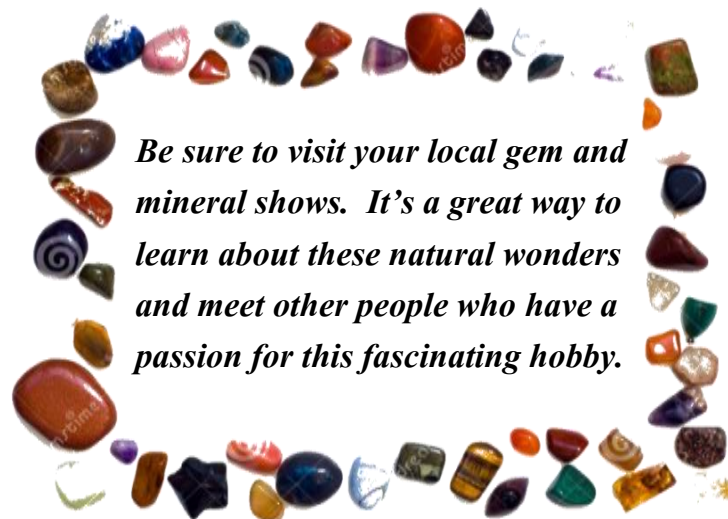
Amador County Gem & Mineral Society
Gem and Craft Show at Kennedy Mine, 12594 Kennedy Mine Rd.,
Jackson, VA 95642
Hours: 10 AM - 4 PM
Contact: (916) 698-9853, mountaingirl@volcano.net
Website: <http://amadorgemandmineral.org>

June 10-11, 2023 – Escondido, CA

Palomar Gem and Mineral Club
The Convention Center at the California Center for the Arts – 340
North Escondido Blvd, Escondido CA 92025
Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, 10 AM – 4 PM
9000 square feet of Artisans selling handmade silver, gold, beaded
and fabricated jewelry, antique and vintage jewelry, commercial
quality gold and silver faceted stone jewelry, handmade specialty
cabochons, mineral specimens, gem trees, other lapidary decorative
items and rough rock from Africa, Australia as well as the USA.
Don't have the time to go to Quartzite or Tucson – come to
Escondido and shop local.
Contact: tonifloyd41615@gmail.com
Website: <http://palomargem.org>

June 17, 2023 – Bellflower, CA

Delvers Gem & Mineral Society
DELVERS PARKING LOT SALE, 14515 Blaine Ave., Bellflower, CA
90706
Hours: 10 AM – 4 PM
Website: <https://delversgemclub.wordpress.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.

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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.

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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 56, Issue 4

— 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
April 20th 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, April 20th, at
7:00 p.m. at the Anaheim Downtown Community Center

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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