

The Opal Express

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Happy
Mother's Day

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President's Message

Greetings Opalholics!

I know by the calendar it's Spring, but it sure feels a lot like summer these past few days! I hope everyone is getting out and enjoying the beautiful weather we're having!

Plans for the opal show are coming along nicely. As always, we are in need of volunteers to help with the show. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Veronica Purpura and she will let you know how you can help. Also, please contact Veronica if you would like to be a vendor

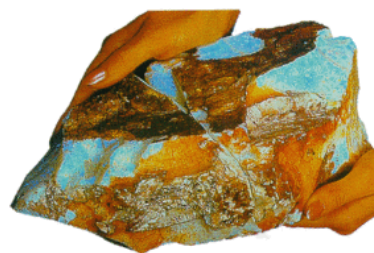
The meeting for May will be at the Downtown Anaheim Community Center on Thursday, May 18th, starting at 7:00 p.m. Hope to see you there!

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: ShowOct2023**

Famous Opals – "Olympic Australis"



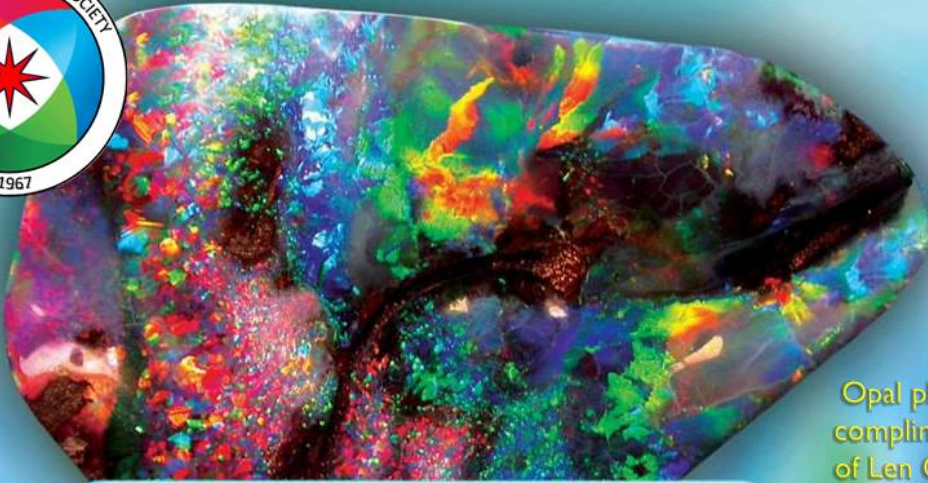
(Picture and information courtesy of Altmann & Cherny)

The "Olympic Australis" is reported to be the largest and most valuable gem opal ever found. It was found in 1956 at the famous "Eight Mile" opal field in Coober Pedy, South Australia. Coober Pedy, A miner working his claim found the opal at a depth of 30 feet. It was named in honor of the Olympic Games, which were being held in Melbourne at the time. This extraordinary opal consists of 99% gem opal with an even colour throughout the stone, and is one of the largest and most valuable opals ever found. The balance of 1% is the remaining soil still adhering to the stone. It weighs 17,000 carats (3450 grams) and is 11 inches long (280 mm), with a height of 4¾ inches (120 mm) and a width of 4½ inches (115 mm). It was valued at AUD\$2,500,000 in 2005. Due to the purity of the opal it is anticipated that upwards of 7000 carats could be cut from the piece. However owing to it's uniqueness, the opal will remain exactly as found.

Source - <https://www.opalsdownunder.com.au/learn/famous-opals/>

We're Back!

After three long years, the Opal Show is back and we have a new location!



Opal photo
compliments
of Len Cram

53rd Annual Opal Show
October 28-29, 2023
Velvet Rose Event Center



American Opal Society proudly presents
53rd Annual OPAL, GEM & JEWELRY SHOW

October 28th & 29th, 2023

Saturday 10AM - 6PM

Sunday 10AM - 5PM

!Fabulous New Location!

Velvet Rose Event Center

300 S. Flower St., Orange, CA 92868

Opal and Gem Dealers from around the USA and beyond
Rough and Cut Opals, other gemstones, jewelry & supplies
Huge Drawing Grand Prize custom design by Stan McCall
many other prizes: gemstones, jewelry, books, tools, surprises
Free Demonstrations gemstone cutting, jewelry making, gemstone identification, faceting, gold panning and more!

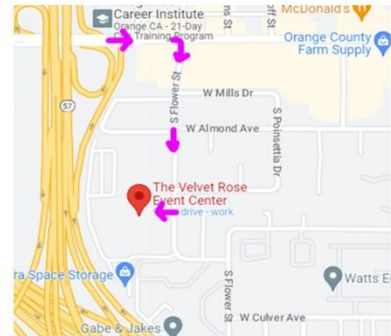
ADMISSION \$5.00 ADULTS

STUDENTS WITH ID & CHILDREN UNDER 15 FREE

FREE PARKING

American Opal Society, Inc.
PO Box 4875
Garden Grove, CA 92842-4875
Contact: Veronica Purpura (714) 501-9959
info@opalsociety.org <http://opalsociety.org>
(dealer inquiries welcome)

DIRECTIONS: exit Chapman from the 57 towards Orange. Take Flower Street and follow. Make a right into the venue just after passing Larkspur Drive. Parking lot is in the back. There is a church next door.



Lightning Ridge: Present & Future

by Stephen and Mary Aracic

Photos by Stephen Aracic

from

Metal Stone & Glass Magazine – Autumn 2004, Vol. 26

“Lightning Ridge Exposed”

as told to AOS editor, Kathleen James

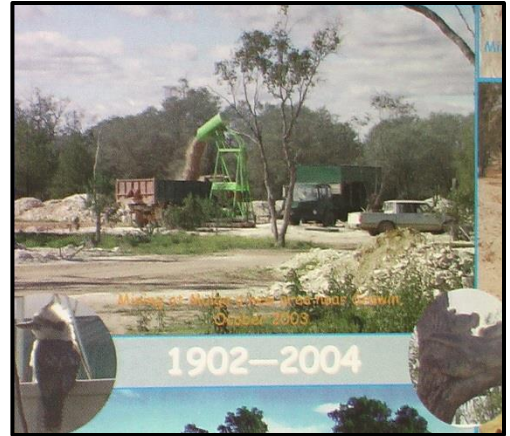
In 1995, Lightning Ridge was regarded as the Opal Capital of the World, taking away the title from Coober Pedy. Mintabe was a nose in front of Coober Pedy from 1985 to 1991, and then its opal production fell behind Coober Pedy's.

Sources from the Gem Industry Council and the Mines Departments of South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland show that approximately \$100 million worth of rough opal is produced annually, Australia-wide, about 94% of opal production. Despite the economy, war on terrorism and SARS in 2004, Lightning Ridge is still the Opal Capital of the World.

Lightning Ridge had an average production of \$48.5 million in opal between 1987 and 1993, peaking at \$62 million in 1990. South Australia produced 40% of the total value of the world markets. Coober Pedy 25%, Mintabe 12% and Andamooka 3%. Queensland produced 4%, whereas Lightning Ridge produced 50%.

The latest discovery in 2002 being Shields Mulga Rush and still expanding. It produced the finest seam gem opal; one of them weighing over a kilogram. Noodling on the designated dumps is often profitable for tourists. Now just how was our “Home of the Black Opal” discovered? Well it all depends on your source of information.

According to the Australian Museum Magazine, it was 1923. Black Opal of Lightning Ridge was discovered in about 1895 and has produced some of the finest opal ever found.



Mining at Mulga

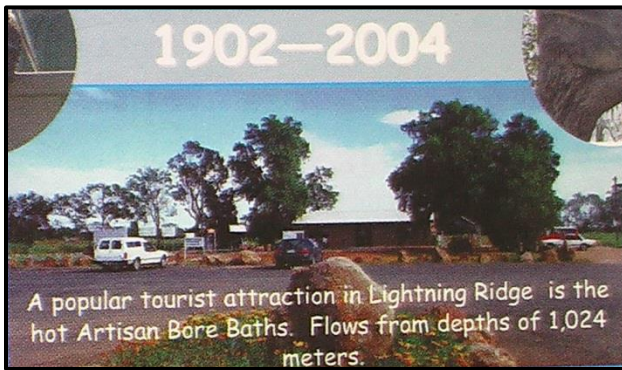
Prices fluctuated up and down until 1914. war injured the market to a great extent, but it did not take long until new markets opened up. There was a demand for low grade opal for the bottom trade. This class of opal was formally cast aside as valueless.

In 1919, about 40 returned soldiers began mining. There were many advantages for them, especially those who were on a pension sufficient to keep them in provisions. Those in delicate health needed only to work on the surface. Very often, valuable gems were obtained from surface work. In 1920 other fields continued to yield gems of the finest quality for a ready market and eager buyers. Quite a number of men picked over the dumps on the surface searching for opals thrown out on the waste heaps at various times.

Continued on Page 4

In the last 30 years, the value of opal steadily increased and so did the population of Lightning Ridge. The business sector of that town improved and it has become a very attractive place to live and mine for opal. There is a lovely grocery store, a butcher shop, a number of cafes and quite a few opal shops. The Tourist Information Centre, on Bill O'Brian Way in town is next to Opal FM (Lightning Ridge Community Radio, Inc.) and directly opposite Lions Park is the Lightning Ridge Miner's Association Centre.

Then there are motels, a modern Bowling Club and caravan parks. There are some accommodations at local homesteads just a few kilometers out of town, in peaceful surroundings. There is a library and an Olympic size swimming pool. And further along Pandora Street is the ever-popular Artesian Bore Baths. People come from long distances to enjoy a dip in the warm mineral water. Test it first before you jump in!



There is a good preschool to year 12, a central school and TAFE Campus. Buses that once transported children to school in Walgett are now a thing of the past.

The Health Centre is excellent! And finally we have a brand new hospital since mid-2003. An Ochre Health Service providing a private doctor's surgery – including an ambulance service, emergency service and fire brigade, and a police station with a number of police on duty.

There's an airline service 3 days a week on a chartered plane. A bus service to Dubbo daily that joins the XPT train to Sydney in air conditioned comfort. There is also a bus service to Brisbane 2 days a week.

The town is serviced by TV channels and very good radio stations – 2WEB Bourke and more.

There are four service stations and garages for mechanical repairs. An industrial area providing many services of trade for miners. The population is about 6,000 during winter months, including miner's camping out on the fields. Many live in camps on the opal fields and there are a number of seasonal residents. Opal production declined in the last five years due to mining fields being exhausted and sale of opal dropped due to global crisis. However, tourism has picked up fantastically.

The surrounding lands are green with vegetation in the wet season with plenty of wildlife – kangaroos, koalas, emus, kookaburras and colourful birds, such as red-winged parrots. Noisy scrub birds, Brolgas, Port Lincoln Ringnecks. Red-capped robins and little lorikeets.

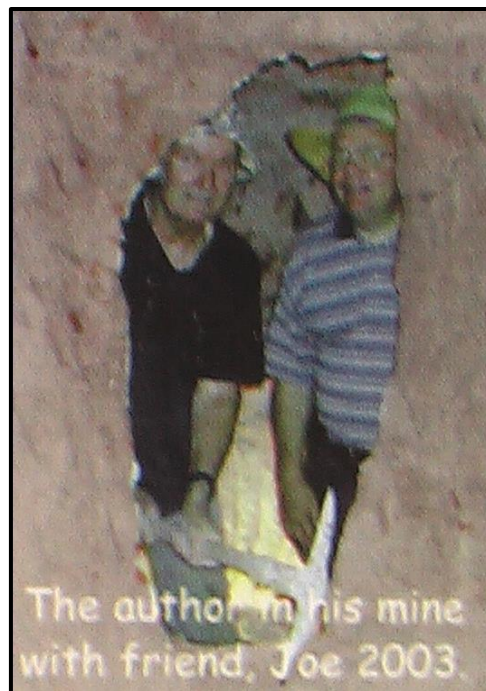
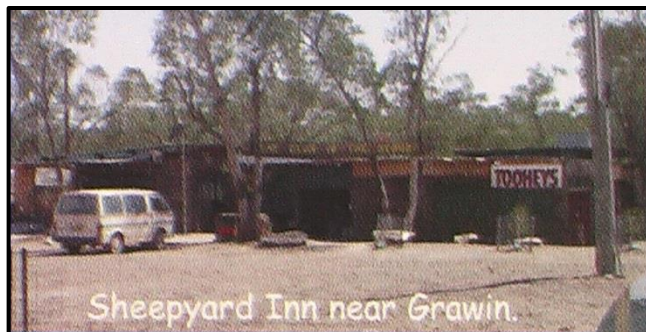
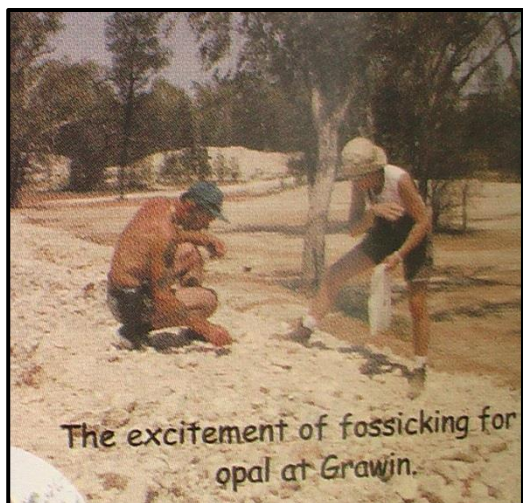
Pelicans nest from time-to-time in local dams. Water hens share the same dams. Pink and gray Galahs rend the air with their noisy chatter along with Major Mitchell cockatoos and lots of smaller birds.

There are thousands of rabbits and hares, a few fox, feral cats and stray dogs. Some lizards, venomous snakes and spiders of many varieties. Some dangerous like Redback, Trapdoor, Funnel Web and the Mouse Spider. There are many varieties of butterflies, colourful flowers and native shrubs around the fields. Some native fruits, berries and bee hives nesting in Box Gum trees. Not forgetting a delicious, nutritious Pigweed that has a little flower! It grows wild – avoid sprays!

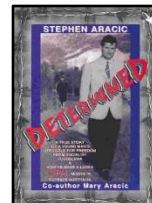
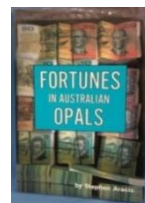
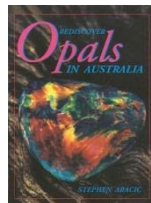
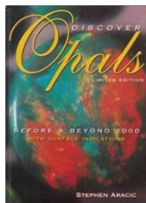
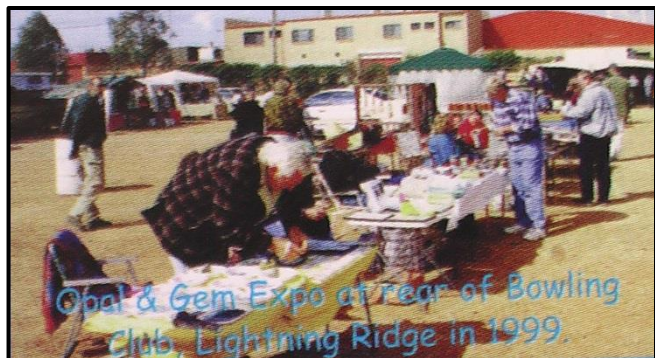
Continued on Page 5

Guided tours are available on the fields and day trips around the Ridge. Also Cumborah, Garwin, Carter's Rush, Glengarry and Sheeppyard and an exciting trip to Mehi Opal Fields, New Angledool. Inquiries can be made at the Tourist Centre on the right side to town, opposite the Mining Centre and Roads & Transport.

Easter is an exciting time around the opal fields. There's the Easter Horse Races, Friday Night Rodeo and Bull Ride. The Easter Egg Hunt, Miner's Challenge and Street Parade. Not forgetting the Opal & Gem Expo held in the Bowling Club each year in July.



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.

'Ultra-rare' Pink Diamond Expected to Sell for More than \$35 million at Auction



A pink diamond of "unparalleled color and brightness" is expected to fetch over \$35 million when it goes on sale in New York, auction house Sotheby's announced Wednesday.

Weighing 10.57 carats and named The Eternal Pink, the "ultra-rare" gemstone will go under the hammer this June, four years after South African firm De Beers discovered it at one of its mines in Botswana.

Officially classed as "purplish pink" in color, it is the most valuable diamond of its shade ever to appear at auction, according to Sotheby's. The auction house's head of jewelry for the Americas, Quig Bruning, said in a statement that the stone was "joining the ranks of the most important diamonds in history."

The price of diamonds is largely determined by what gemology experts call the four "Cs": carat, cut, color and clarity. For the latter grading, the stone has been classed as "internally flawless," meaning any blemishes are only visible under close magnification. Its color has meanwhile been designated "fancy vivid," the highest grade of intense color achieved by only 4% of pink diamonds.

"This color is the most beautiful and concentrated shade of pink in diamonds that I have ever seen or has ever come to market," Bruning said, adding: "The Eternal Pink's immense presence and great rarity make it comparable to ultimate masterpieces of art — far rarer than a Magritte or a Warhol."

Pink diamonds have soared in value in recent years. This is due, in part, to a slump in supply caused by the 2020 closure of Australia's Argyle Mine, which previously produced most of the world's pink diamonds. According to an index compiled by brokerage Australian Diamond Portfolio, the average price of the colored stones jumped 30% in just the 12 months before June 2021.

The Eternal Pink was cut from a rough diamond, discovered in 2019, that at 23.87 carats weighed more than twice as much as it does now. It took diamond firm Diacore six months to transform the stone into its current form.

Less than 3% of diamonds submitted to the Gemological Institute of America (GIA) are colored, with pink ones among the rarest, Sotheby's said. In the auction house's press release, the GIA's executive vice president Tom Moses called the Eternal Pink a "stunning specimen," adding that its "refined lines combined with the intensity of its color earn it a place as one of the world's most extraordinary gems."

The stone will be unveiled in Hong Kong on Saturday. It will then be exhibited in several cities, including Dubai, Singapore and Geneva, before heading to New York for June's sale.

The auction record for a pink diamond — or a polished diamond of any color — is currently held by a 59.6-carat stone that sold for £71.2 million at Sotheby's Hong Kong in 2017. The pink diamond was purchased by Hong Kong jewelers Chow Tai Fook and renamed "CTF Pink Star."

A 11.15 carat pink diamond dubbed "Williamson Pink Star" meanwhile holds the record for the highest per-carat auction price, after it sold for 453.2 million Hong Kong dollars (\$58 million) last year.



Weighing 10.57 carats and named The Eternal Pink, the "ultra-rare" gemstone will go under the hammer this June. Credit: Sotheby's

Source: <https://www.cnn.com/style/article/pink-diamond-sale-june-2023-sothebys-new-york/index.html>

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~ 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

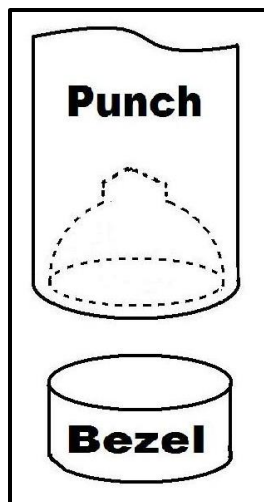
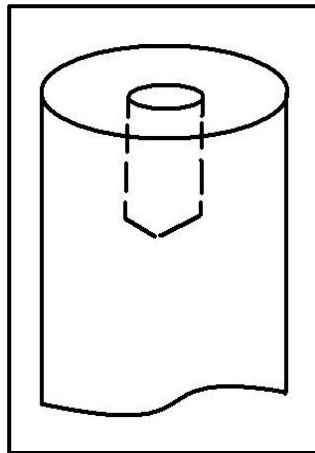
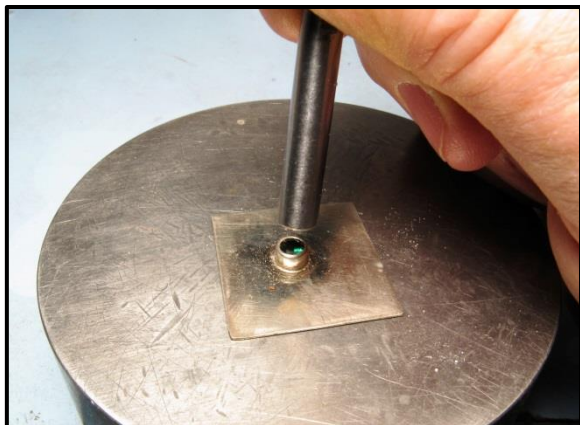
BEZEL CLOSER

by Brad Smith

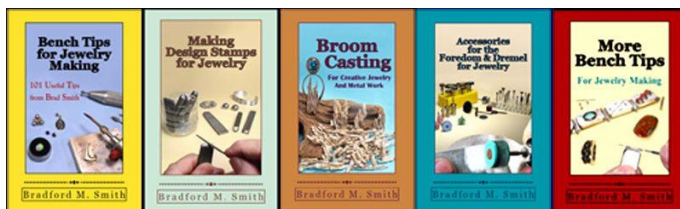
A bezel closer is a steel punch that makes quick work out of setting small 2-8mm round cabs or faceted stones. It works with regular bezels, with tube settings, and with prong settings. Stones can be set in as little as 30 seconds.

The working end is a concave cavity that fits over the bezel and is pushed and twisted to close the bezel and capture the stone. Sets can be purchased but are \$60-\$80 and contain many sizes you'll probably never use.

A smarter strategy is to select one or two gemstone sizes that you like for accent stones and make your own bezel closer for them. All you need is a round steel rod or bolt that's a couple millimeters larger than your bezel cup, some drills and a large ball bur.



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.

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: marylandoriele@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/>

June 23-25, 2023 – Lodi, CA

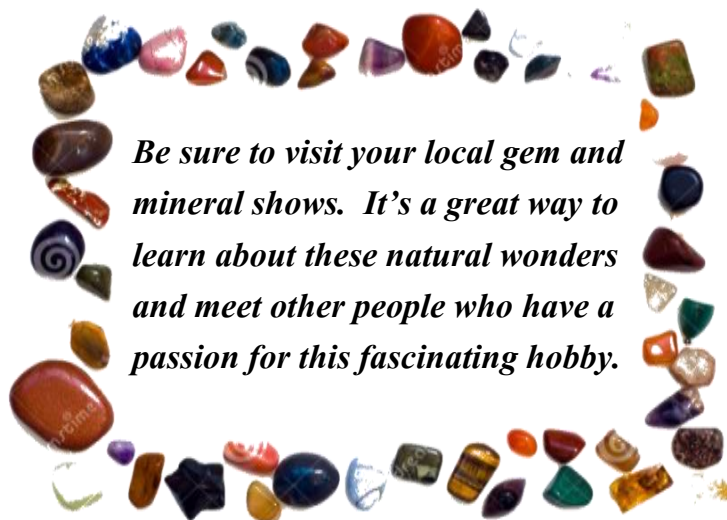
CFMS Show and Convention
Lodi Grape Festival Grounds, 413 E. LOCKEFORD ST., Lodi, CA 95240
Hours: Friday and Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM
Educational Exhibits, Speakers
Adults \$6, Kids 12 & under FREE
Free admission to MILITARY Active, Veterans and their Dependents with valid Military ID card. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE
For information: rocksbob@sbcglobal.net
Dealer information: slchaisson@yahoo.com

July 8-9, 2023 – Culver City, CA

Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 6 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 5 PM
Culver City Gem and Mineral Society
Culver City Veteran's Memorial Auditorium, 4117 Overland Ave., Culver City, CA 90203
60th Annual Fiesta of Gems – 2023 Theme: Druzy
Free Admission – Free Parking – Free Hourly Drawings
35 Vendors Featuring Minerals, Gems, Jewelry, Fossils, Lapidary & Jewelry making supplies, Books, Etc.
Free Exhibits of Minerals, Gems, Fossils, Crystals, Handcrafted Jewelry, Meteorites, Etc.
Free Demonstrations of Jewelry Making and Earth Sciences
Free Mineral Specimen for the Kids plus Rock Games & Earth Science Education Displays
Grand Prize Raffle drawing on Sunday
Contact: lexyhunter@aol.com
Website: <http://culvercityrocks.org/fiesta/>

August 4, 5 & 6, 2023 – Nipomo, CA

Orcutt Mineral Society
Nipomo High School, 525 N. Thompson Ave., Nipomo, CA 93444
Hours: Aug 4 & 5 – 10 AM – 5 PM, Aug 6 – 10 AM – 4 PM
The 55th Annual Rockhound Tailgating Rock & Gem Festival
Free Admission and Free Parking
Contact: nipomocowgirl55@yahoo.com
Website: <http://www.omsinc.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.

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 56, Issue 5

— 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
May 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 Thursday, May 18th, at
7:00 p.m. at the Anaheim Downtown Community Center

American Opal Society

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