

The Opal Express

Celebrate



Dads & Grads

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American
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Society

June 2023

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President's Message

Greetings Opalholics!

Plans are continuing to come together for the opal show. We are in need of volunteers! It really does take a village to help put on this show. We need people to man the tables and take tickets, sell tickets for the drawing and answer questions from visitors. If you can spare some time and 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. Vendor applications are now ready!

The meeting for June will be at the Downtown Anaheim Community Center on Thursday, June 15th, 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

- DON'T FORGET -

FATHER'S DAY
IS
SUNDAY, JUNE 18TH

What Makes an Opal Unique?

Opals are unique because they display a rainbow-like display due to their intrinsic microstructure which diffracts white light into all the colors of the spectrum.

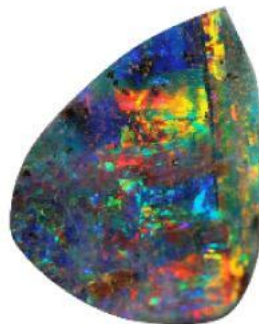
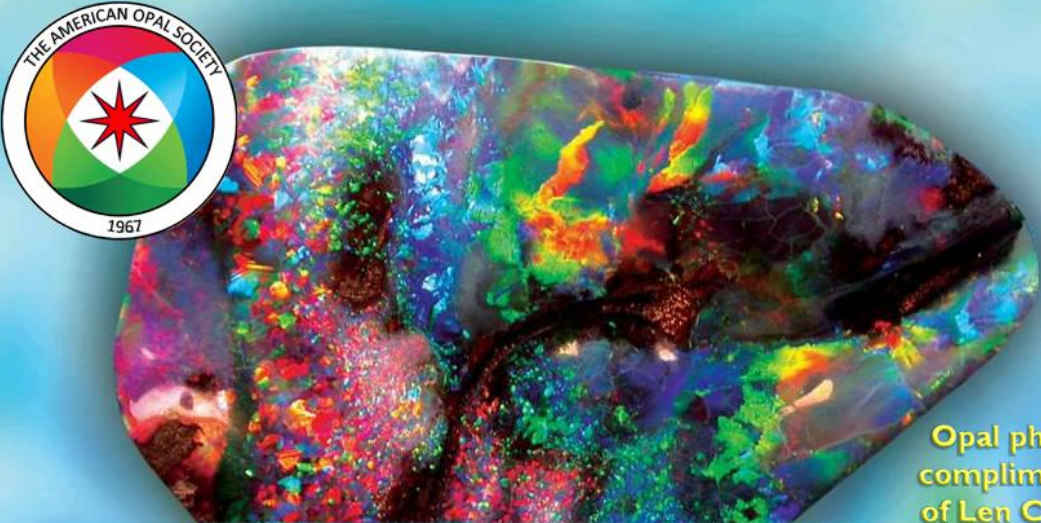


Photo: <https://australianopalcutters.com/pages/opal-types>

Source: Google

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

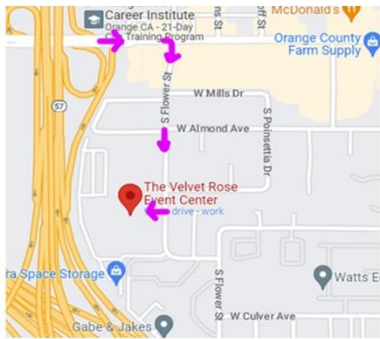
October 28th & 29th, 2023 Saturday 10AM - 6PM Sunday 10AM - 5PM	!Fabulous New Location! Velvet Rose Event Center 300 S. Flower St., Orange, CA 92868
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Opal and Gem Dealers from around the USA and beyond
Rough and Cut Opals, other gemstones, jewelry & 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

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.

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)



Gem Opals of the World

by Stephen and Mary Aracic

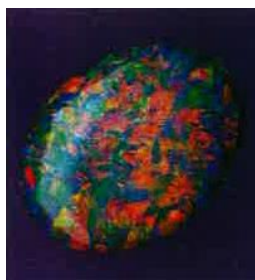
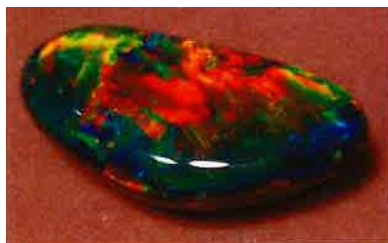
Photos by Stephen Aracic

from

Metal Stone & Glass Magazine – 2008

as told to AOS editor, Kathleen James

The story of gem opal presented on the world markets is fascinating because not only do we speak highly of the majesty of Australia's national gemstone, but we are beginning to see the beauty of opals in other parts of the world as well. The wonder of this glorious gem leaves us spellbound, for opal is the true gift of nature hidden in the recesses of the earth as old as time itself.



Two beautiful examples of Lightning Ridge Black Opal.

Come and dig for me she invites, for I'd like to colour your world with riches. I am what dreams are made of - the rock of ages, the karma and tranquility to soothe the soul. Come sit with me awhile and gaze at my wondrous spectrum of colours. Tell me what you see. Is it money, rare beauty or both?

How many times has this happened to past miners before the advent of modern machinery, which seems to have replaced "romancing the stone" forever. The miner, upon hearing that distinctive "chink" of the pick, knows he has struck opal and it's music to his ears. He would sit and gaze at its sparkling beauty by candlelight, absorbing the immensity of his rare find that no other gem could com-

pare to. Said miner could fill his pockets with a fortune, scarcely noticing the weight, which in other locations he would not only need mining machinery for lifting heavy rocks, but sacks or drums to transport them to the cutters.

Australia is very fortunate to have such a stunning variety of opal throughout the country. From New South Wales to South Australia to a scattering of the most isolated of opal fields in Western Queensland. To mine in the isolation of this latter region is for the brave-hearted, but well worth the effort if he or she strikes boulder opal. And would you believe that there's opal amongst the gold in Coolgardie, Western Australia? Just a short distance from the famous El Dorado gold mine, gem opal on black basalt rock backing can be found. If free of impurities, it is truly a top grade gem opal.

It is true to say that good quality gem opal will stand up well to the test of time, while a small percentage of lower grade varieties tend to crack or craze and this is true of any country, including Australia. Quality gem opal can be and is found in other parts of the world such as Mexico, Canada, America, Ethiopia and Hungary amongst others. When opal does crack or craze, and it is rarer than you might think, this is due to the impurities of mineral content in the earth like salt (sodium) and gypsum. This inferior type of opal has a high water content, while stable gem opal has

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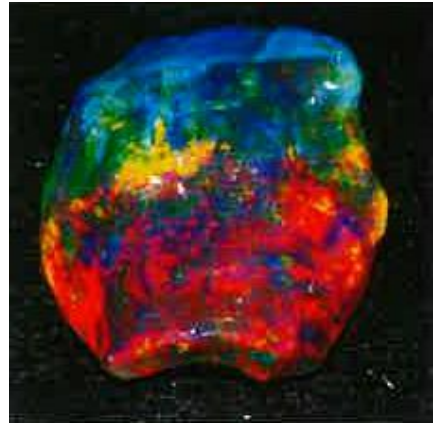
very low or hardly any water content. The moisture tends to dry out within the stone forming web-like features.

I'll never forget a time I was waiting in line with other miners outside the motel room of a visiting opal dealer to Lightning Ridge named Peter, when he suddenly opened the door and shouted out, "Hands up those from Mehi and Smith's Rush." A few hands went up from the miners, thinking they were being favoured due to the distance they had come. But they would not be so lucky. Peter blew his stack and in no uncertain terms sent them scattering because he'd seen enough rough or semi-rubbed opal in jars of water or plastic bags that would ruin his reputation if it cracked or crazed on him.



A selection of Queensland Boulder Opal.

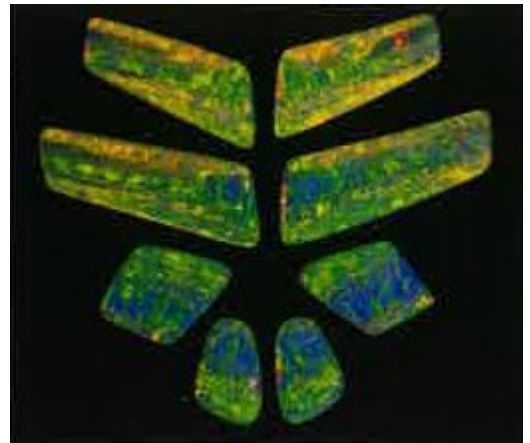
Many years later, there was a prejudice among Ridge miners and opal shop proprietors to the introduction of opal from other localities as they favoured only Lightning Ridge Black Opal. Then gradually the more attractive varieties of opal from other areas became acceptable in the Ridge, followed by black gem and low-grade seam opal from Mintabie which flooded the market with specimens worth millions of dollars. This greatly affected the sale of low-grade opal from Lightning Ridge and the Ridge miners were unable to compete in the market.



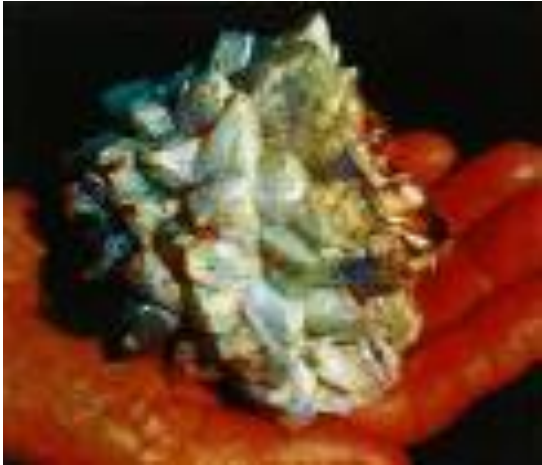
Unusual Ballina Volcanic Opal.

But rushes come and go, tastes and attitudes change and gradually opal from not only other states in Australia but also international finds are becoming more accepted. The opal industry world-wide should unite behind this wonderful gem and promote the quality material no matter where it comes from and leave the inferior specimens out of the market so as to retain the integrity of this most wondrous gem.

The best place to see varieties of the world's best opals is during the Tucson Gem Show where you can feast your eyes on a spectrum of colours – a truly international flavour with many countries represented, including those mentioned above. Gem quality opal should be promoted above other gemstones no matter where it has come from.



Andamooka South Australian Crystal Opal.

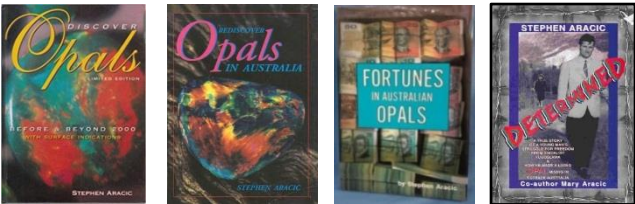


White Cliffs Pineapple Opal.



Yowah Nuts.

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.

5 Interesting Facts About Opals

Opal is arguably the most unique, diverse, and beautiful birthstone. Unlike most gemstones, opal is amorphous which means it does not have a defined crystalline structure. It takes on many shapes and colors and in that way, it is pretty unpredictable.

Opals are very interesting and there are some myths that you'll want to know about as well. We even have some spectacular specimens for you to admire as you learn about this fascinating gemstone.

1. Ancient Gemstone

Opals have been the muse of artists, writers, and other creatives since what seems like the beginning of time. The exact origin of opal's name is disputed, but historians are confident that in ancient Rome opal was known as *opalus* which translates as the "precious stone." Was the opal the ancient Romans admired the same as the one we admire today? No one is sure. However, evidence of opal artifacts date as far back as 4000 B.C.



Photo: Harry Taylor / Getty Images

Continued on Page 6

2. Opal Development

Not only has opal been in the minds and hearts of mankind for hundreds, if not thousands, of years, opals take a very long time to form.

Though the exact cause of opal formation is still disputed, many believe that silica was carried down into rock crevices by heavy rains. Once the water evaporated, what was left was a silica gel that then hardened over the course of what some believe is millions of years. This didn't happen overnight! It takes roughly 5 million years to solidify just one centimeter of opal.

This theory makes sense considering opal has water in it. The water content of an opal can be upwards of 20 percent but is usually in the 5 percent range.



Photo: aleskramer / Getty Images

3. Origins and Types

It is estimated that nearly 95% of the world's opal comes from Australia. Other countries that commonly mine opals include Ethiopia, Brazil, and Mexico.

There are two types of opals: precious and common. Precious opals either have vibrant color (fire opal) or exhibit a *play of color*. Play of color is a term coined to describe the unique multi-dimensional color display that the more precious opals have.



Photo: John Sones Singing Bowl Media / Getty Images

4. Opal Colors

Precious opals have two basic colors, their background color and their play of color. The background color is caused by impurities within the silica. Within the precious opal family, there are many different varieties of opal. Each has their own unique color combinations and character traits. Opals can be found orange, yellow, red, green, blue, or purple. Black opals are considered one of the rarest gemstones, though they too can be a variety of dark colors.

The other colors are caused by the way silica forms together. Silica is composed of a bunch of tiny spheres that adhere to one another. When they fuse, tiny gaps are created between them that allow the light to diffract. This diffraction causes a magnitude of different shapes and color combinations.



Photo: Dorling Kindersley / Getty Images

5. Price of Opals

Unlike many other gemstones on the market, opals are usually left in their natural state. However, some common treatments include fracture filling and smoke treatment, which is used to darken the stone.

Opals that have the most intense and diverse play of color are generally the most expensive and prized. Boulder opal is the only opal that can display the entire rainbow within one stone. That's at least seven colors if you count indigo.



Photo: Wilson Valentin / Getty Images

Source: <https://www.thesprucecrafts.com/opal-facts-2042975>

~ 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

PRE-MADE BEZEL CUPS

by Brad Smith



As a general rule of thumb I assume it's going to take me 15 - 20 minutes to make a bezel for an ordinary cabochon, so for some projects buying pre-made cups can save a lot of time. But if you go this route, keep in mind three things. First, try to get cups made from fine silver, not sterling. Fine silver is softer and burnishes over the stone more easily.

Second, you may have trouble matching the shape and size of the stone with the shape and size of the bezel cup. Purchased cups can only be found in a limited number of standard sizes. You may have to adjust your choice of gemstone to match the cup. The other consideration is that pre-made cups often have fairly low side walls. While these are fine for low-dome stones, they're not dependable for stones with steep side walls.

Lastly before setting, check the fit of your gemstone in the cup, particularly around the bottom. The bottom corners of a stamped cup are much more rounded than a bezel you would fabricate yourself. This causes a problem with stones that have a sharp edge around the bottom. Burnishing the bezel over one of these stones will place a lot of stress on the stone and may cause it to crack. To avoid this, I round off the bottom edge of the stone with a diamond file (or use sandpaper on soft stones).

DIVIDERS

by Brad Smith



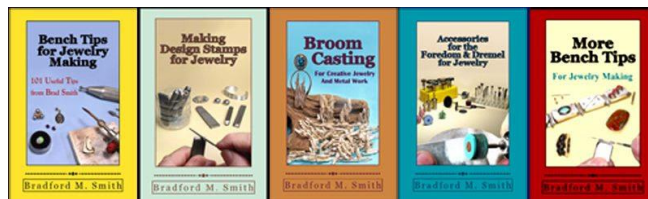
A set of dividers is a tool I find very useful in laying out the geometry of a piece I'm making. It has two needle-like tips with an adjustment to set the spacing between them.

They can be used to transfer a measurement. Let's say you need a 7mm wide strip of sheet metal. Set the spacing between the divider tips to 7 mm on the ruler. Then lay the sheet on the bench, put one tip against the edge, and run the dividers down the edge scribing a line parallel to the edge.

Dividers can be used to mark equal segments of a line or arc. For instance, assume a line between A and B that might be straight or curved, and you want to divide it into 5 equal lengths. Set the dividers to an estimate of the distance. Starting at Point A, use the dividers to mark off five lengths along the line. If you end up short of Point B, lengthen the distance on the dividers. If you end up overshooting Point B, shorten the length of your dividers. After a few tries, the length on the dividers will be the exact distance you need to mark the 5 segments.

Dividers can let you quickly find the center of a circular disk. With one tip of the dividers at the edge of the disk, set the other tip to an estimate of where the center might be. Fix one tip of the dividers at the 3 o'clock position and scribe an arc with the other tip near the center. Do this again from the 6 o'clock, 9 o'clock, and 12 o'clock positions. The arcs at the center will form a small four-sided box. The center of the box is at the center of the disk.

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.

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>

August 5-6, 2023 – Roseville, CA

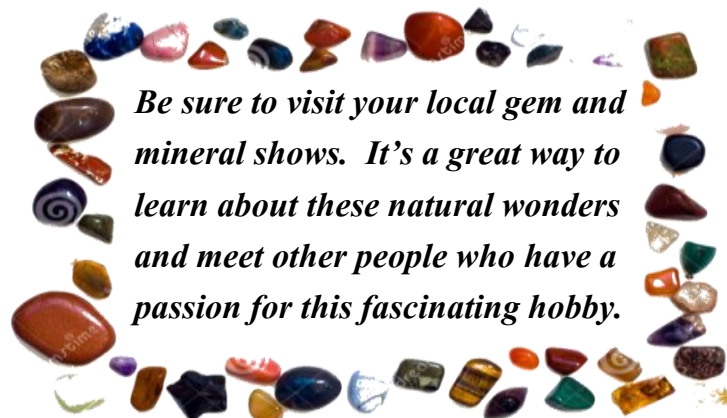
Roseville Rock Rollers Gem and Mineral Society
Roebbelen Event Center, @the Grounds – Roseville, 700 Event Center Dr., Roseville, CA 95678
Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM
61st Roseville Gem, Jewelry, Mineral and Fossil Show
Over 60 vendors, inside and out, featuring Crystals, Fossils, Minerals from around the world, Opal, Amethyst, Beads, Gemstones, Meteorites, Gold, and for Kids – “Education Station”, Gold Nuggets, Prospecting equipment, detectors and supplies, Petrified Wood, Stone carvings. Watch Demonstrations in the Lapidary Arts and bid on Silent Rock Auctions. Free – Scientific Mineral and Gem ID! Bring your Rocks, Gems, Minerals, Meteorites and treasures, for a no-cost Scientific Identification. General Admission \$8, Seniors 60+ \$7, Kids – 12 and under Free. Parking \$10. Discount coupon.
Contact: gloriarosevilleroockrollers@gmail.com
Website: <https://www.rockrollers.com/index.html>

August 19-20, 2023 – Tehachapi, CA

Tehachapi Valley Gem and Mineral Society
Annual Tehachapi Valley Gem and Mineral Show
500 East “F” Street, Tehachapi, CA 93561
Hours: 9 AM – 5 PM
Gems and minerals, jewelry, activities for kids and much more. Free admission.
Contact: (661) 972-1117, travis462@outlook.com
Website: <https://www.tvgms.rocks>

August 26-27, 2023 – Arcadia, CA

Pasadena Lapidary Society
Arcadia Masonic Lodge, 50 W. Duarte Rd., Arcadia CA 91007
Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM
Contact: (626) 260-7239
Website: <https://pasadenalapidary.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
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Garden Grove, CA 92842-4875

Volume 56, Issue 6

— 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
June 15th 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, June 15th, at
7:00 p.m. at the Anaheim Downtown Community Center

American Opal Society

Website: <http://OpalSociety.org>
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/opalsociety>
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Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/opalsociety>
YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCegTIH1IEyO7y8wdqVRfyUA?view_as=subscriber

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