

The Opal Express

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President's Message

Greetings Opalholics!

Can the weather possibly get any hotter? I hope you are all staying hydrated and cool!

If you are a vendor and have signed up for the Opal Show, I have mailed some show postcards to you to use at your upcoming shows or to mail to your customers. If you are a vendor and have not signed up for the show, there's still time! Please contact Veronica Purpura and she will give you all the details.

We're hoping to make our first show after the pandemic our best one ever, but we need your help! The American Opal Society is 100% volunteer run and managed, a few people working very hard for the whole of our society. I encourage our fellow members to volunteer, especially at our annual opal and gem show this year. **YOUR SOCIETY NEEDS YOU!!!**

Stan McCall
AOS President
Custom Creative Gem Cutting



Let's extend a hearty AOS welcome to our newest member!

William Rodgers

Thank you William for joining the American Opal Society!

Did You Know?

- September was originally the seventh month of the year.
- September is the only month not named after a Roman deity.
- September is the only month with the same number of letters in its name as the number of the month (9).

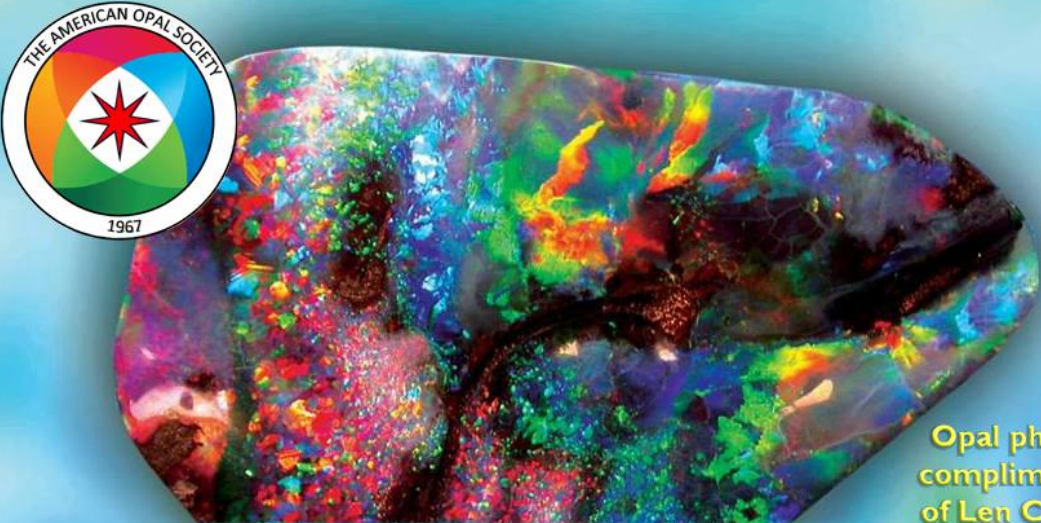
Member area access is available only to members in good standing. Any other entry is unauthorized.

USER NAME: member

PASSWORD: AOSGemOpal395

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

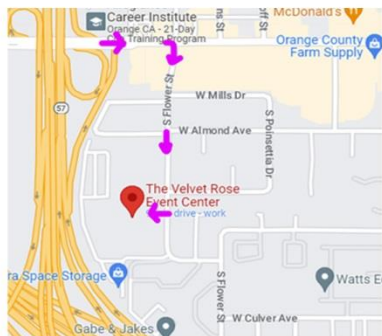
October 28th & 29th, 2023 Saturday 10AM - 6PM Sunday 10AM - 5PM	!Fabulous New Location! Velvet Rose Event Center 300 S. Flower St., Orange, CA 92868
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Opal and Gem Dealers from around the USA and beyond
Rough and Cut Opals, other gemstones, jewelry &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

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.



Is Opal Australia's Best-Kept Secret?

Metal, Stone & Glass

November 2006

by Mary and Stephen Aracic

as told to AOS editor, Kathleen James



According to some observers, Opal is Australia's best-kept secret. When Mary and I attended the shows this year in 2006 with our Opal books, we listened with interest to the feelings of those we met.

We took along our very good friend, Janet Babis for her very first visit to the Yowah Opal Festival! Having left Lightning Ridge before the rain, we enjoyed the scenic drive, stopping for coffee breaks at our favourite spots, a journey that took 8 hours. Janet just loved the quaint little towns along the way. We visited the Tourist Information Centre in the beautiful town of Cunnamulla to replenish our books, "Determined" and "Rediscover Opals in Australia". At the same time we were able to get a copy of "The Nutcracker" presented in colour for the first time. Janet loved it as it gave great info of events at Yowah.

Our next stop was the cute little town of Eulo, famous for the Eulo Queen Hotel, Date Farm and Paroo Honey. The latter two we had to have, so a stop at the interesting little store was a must! It was there to our surprise we met Rudy Webber, who with a couple of mates, were on their way from Sydney to the Opal Festival in Yowah for a bit of excitement!

We had settled comfortably into our camp across the park from the show grounds. On opening day, up went the curtain on Yowah and down came the rain! It was so spectacular that you could forget the fireworks and the excitement they caused to the young and not-so-young.

This was poetry in motion and the roads and creeks were flooded. As the day wore on, we chatted and had coffee after coffee then lunch. Janet wondered if she'd ever see Yowah, except through a glass window. Undaunted, we amused ourselves but wondered if the show would be a washout, placing the organisers at a loss.

Suddenly mid afternoon the caterers arrived and we watched with interest their progress into and from the kitchen. Then out of nowhere a colourful marquee appeared. As dark curtains of night descended, the place lit up with the colourful lights and the show got off to a wet start. Cars, mainly 4x4 WD, arrived and there was a scurry for shelter. We enjoyed dinner in luxury while those across the way would no doubt eat theirs in rain-soaked gravy. Having watched The Bill on T.V., music across the way lulled us to sleep.

The next day the rain ceased and people were setting up stalls. After a yummy breakfast, we joined them and set up our book stall. Let the fun begin we thought! A small gathering of visitors, who had made it before the rain, moved slowly amongst the stalls making purchases here and there. Meantime all eyes were on the Western horizon as an ominous black cloud appeared indicating that rain would soon fall. Plastic sheets were spread over the stalls as Mary and I quickly packed our books in the vehicle. We were fascinated to see that no one gave up! Such was the enthusiasm.

Continued on Page 4

Off came the covers and out came our books as the rain ceased and the show went on amidst happy chatter. We sold more books that weekend in Yowah than ever before!

We met with Rudy Webber and Mary asked him if he made it to opening night with his mates. He said, "Yes!". We wouldn't have missed it for the world. Part of the fun was sloshing his way to the amenities, ankle deep in mud, growing taller as muck built up on the soles of our boots. It was something to tell the folks back in Sydney of the fun weekend in Yowah.

Crowds gathered happily around a bonfire that warmed the night air. People were lining up for a scrumptious buffet-style meal and we joined them as the lovely singer Dyna Rae sang classic songs! And the band, The Seratonins, played lively music. It started to rain as people were still eating and there was much scrambling for shelter with the band in the marquee. The only ones refusing to budge were Mary and Janet who were determined to enjoy their meal with rain-soaked gravy, then leave their plates to be washed in the rain.

When the rain ceased, people were dancing on the rough ground to the music. We joined in as did Len Cram, and everyone had a fun-loving night, for Yowah is a place where the rich mingle with the not-so-rich and everyone looks happy.

As part of the entertainment, Dyna Rae livened up the show as spruiker, with microphone in hand! She mingled amongst the stall holders announcing their wares. Then she took part in the ladies windlass race, whereby an old car rim must be wound into the finish line. Eddy Maguire and I competed in the senior windlass race. I finished second. Dyna Rae ended the evening with a rendition of songs from the 60s. One particular song she made famous was "Please Don't Talk to the Lifeguards" at age 13. Yes, Dyna Rae proved to be a versatile, dynamic artist.

The show ended on Sunday night following yet another scrumptious buffet-style meal.

Then for us, it was back to the Ridge after we'd shown Janet the unique little town of Yowah, as promised, including a visit to the bluff where from a majestic plateau, the panoramic views of distant mesas look spectacular.

We took the long way home via St. George, the shorter route from Bollen to Dirranbandi being a muddy, rough road after heavy rain. When Opal and Gem Expo got underway in Lightning Ridge, on Thursday of the last weekend of July 2006, it was to a much bigger capacity than Yowah. Lightning Ridge being more commercially inclined, does it in style thus attracting crowds from everywhere.

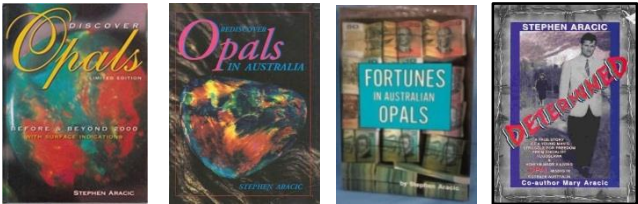
Those setting up stalls at Yowah invariably set up stalls in Lightning Ridge. Likewise, the Ridgites set up stalls in Yowah. There is much sharing of stalls with Grawin people as well as the far away opal fields of Quilpie and those of Koroit.

But back in Lightning Ridge, the general complaint was where are all the opal books of famous authors? Where are your books, Stephen? And where are the books of Gan Bruce, Stuart Lloyd, Les Taylor and Len Cram? Yes, indeed, I added! And where are the books of Ian Idriess, "Lightning Ridge – The Land of Opals", Tully Wollaston's, "Opal the Gem of Never Never" or E. J. Murphy's, "They Struck Opal"? Surely this omission must be rectified in an effort to keep the industry going. We should all work together, bearing in mind that opals, the most beautiful gemstone of love, shows no prejudice. Bear in mind that opal is a talking point, a true stone of fortune, friendship and romance! It brings together people from all over the world. It crosses language barriers.

Returning to our stall, I was pleasantly surprised to find that Mary and I had become “Meet and Greet” to the incoming visitors. So that when a lovely couple of retirees from Blaxland arrived, they could easily find us. They’d taken their very first trip to Lightning Ridge because of an interest in our Opal books. They were so excited with Opal Expo and what the entire town had to offer, that they plan to come again. When Mr. Kidd told us he’d been to visit the school, Mary asked him why. To which he replied that being a retired school principal, he was very interested in our outback school and he thought the set up excellent for a town of this size.

We had great encouragement from Stephen and Joan Milton of Metal, Stone & Glass Magazine, who very kindly took our opal books to the Tucson Gem Shows, especially our hard cover books.

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.

Aboriginal Stories of Opals

Indigenous Australians, or better known as Aboriginal people have lived in Australia since the beginning of time. There are many stories of dreamtimes’ since the beginning of time that tell beautiful stories of how Australia was created. A constant creature within the dreamtime is the Rainbow Serpent; a giant rainbow snake that formed the main rivers throughout Australia when he slithered across the land in search of water to the oceans. The water in Australia is said to be blessed by the Rainbow Serpent, as water is one of the necessities of life. Without the Great Artisian Basin, a body of water under the Australian Earth, Opal would not have been formed. There are therefor great connections between the Rainbow Serpant and the Opals of Australia. Australian Opal has been discovered in many Aboriginal tribal communities including Andamooka, Wallangulla (or better known as Lightning Ridge) and Central Queensland. Because of this, there are various dream time stories of how opal was formed.

Andamooka

For the Aboriginal inhabited land around Andamooka in South Australia, opal was created when their ancestral being was sent to the Earth via a great rainbow. Where the rainbow connected with the land, great rocks and pebbles formed and glittered in the sun with all the colours of the rainbow and opals were born in the Dreamtime.

Continued on Page 6

With tribes gathered, the Dreamtime creator explained the laws of the land, the people, and the land, laws that needed to be followed to establish their way of life. The outcrops of opal were sacred and, due to their mystical properties, were to be used for ceremony in the belief that the rainbow would appear again one day.

Wallangulla (Lightning Ridge)

For the Yuwaalaraay people from around the Wallangulla (Lightning Ridge) area of NSW, their dreaming involves a crocodile named Gurria.

The supreme spirit Bhiamie and his two wives Birring Ooloo, mother nature, and Cunnum-Biellie, law maker/teacher, went for a swim in a spring while travelling through the outback but were unaware Gurria followed them as he coveted their spirits.

Gurria swallowed both women and swam down the Narran River but Bhiamie tracked Gurria to a lake, speared him at Weetalibah water crossing, and as Gurria lay dying, rolled over and his squirming created two holes one by his tail (Coocoran Lake) and one by his nose (Angledool Lake).

As Gurria lay dying, it rained and a rainbow appeared. The colors of the rainbow were trapped in the crocodile’s scales, and with it, opal was formed in the ground. Bhiamie freed his wives from Gurria amd with the help of Ghee-jar, a little black ant, brought them back to life.

Central Queensland

A dreaming from Central Queensland tells the story of the ‘weeping opal’, and comes from a time when a giant opal ruled overt the land and its people when the world was young. This Aboriginal ancestor came to being after two tribes had been warring for so long that their weapons were either broken or lost so the warriors started to hurl boulders at each other.

One warrior threw a boulder so hard that it flew skyward and got stuck in the sky. The boulder started to expand until it burst and revealed the colours of a huge opal. As the opal sprit saw the ravages of the war between the two tribes, tears streamed down as a rainstorm. When the sun shone to reveal the colours of the tears, the survivors of the war saw their first rainbow.

Since then, to the Aborigines, when a rainbow appears, it is a sign that someone had committed a crime against the tribal laws and the tears of the opal were falling in sorrow.

Source: <https://opalgalaxy.com/aboriginal-stories-of-opals/>

What is opal a symbol of?

It has long been a symbol of hope, purity, and truth. Nomadic Arab tribes believed the opal fell to Earth during thunderstorms and held lightning inside. Ancient Greeks felt that opals would present the gift of prophecy—the ability to see into the future.

Source: www.google.com

~ 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

ANNEALING THIN WIRE

by Brad Smith

Annealing thin wire can be tricky. For a good anneal, all areas of the wire must be heated uniformly to just barely red before quenching in water. If you're heating with a torch, the tricky part is how to get every inch of the wire up to the same proper annealing temp without melting any of it.

The first thing I do to avoid problems is to wind the wire into a tight coil about two inches in diameter and bind it together in several places with scrap wire. Any stray loops or loose ends will heat up very quickly and possibly melt before the more bulky coil reaches the annealing temperature. Annealing fine wire with a torch is always risky.

A perfect anneal with no risk of melting is easy if you have an enameling or casting oven. Heat to about 1200 F, place the coil of wire into the oven, let it soak for 5 minutes, and quench.

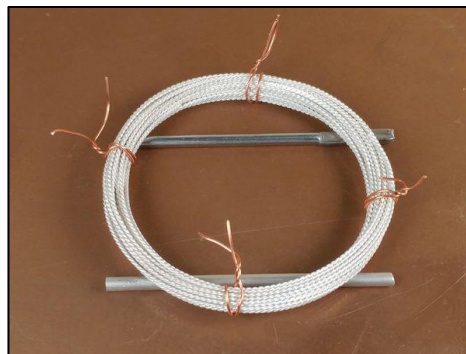
But for those with no oven, here's how I use a scrap of thick sheet metal and an old tuna fish can to build my own "oven" and avoid melting delicate items when annealing.

1. Elevate the sheet on a tripod or a couple fire bricks at your solder station so you can heat it with a torch from below.
2. Place the coil onto the sheet and elevate it with a couple pieces of steel or broken solder pad so the silver wire does not touch the plate. An old bur shaft or a nail works nicely.
3. Cover the wire coil with a metal can similar to what tuna fish comes in.

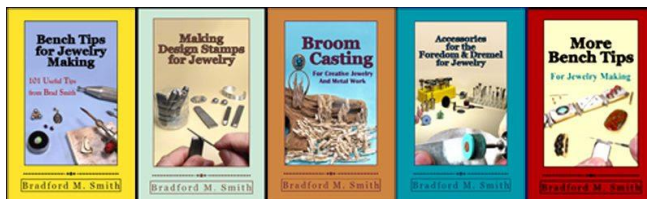
4. Heat from the bottom and hold at the annealing temperature for several minutes before quenching.

Avoid getting the sheet metal red hot. One easy way to gauge the proper annealing temperature inside the can is to use a black marker on the outside as shown. Another is to put a dab of paste flux on the sheet metal plate. The marker will disappear or the flux will melt when the can reaches the proper annealing temperature.

And BTW, the wire coil I'm annealing here is filigree wire that I'm making up for a workshop I'll be teaching this July in Culver City, CA at the Fiesta of Gems Show. For more information on the classes there, see <https://culvercityrocks.org/fiesta/>



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.

September 16-17, 2023 – Reno, NV

Reno Gem and Mineral Society
Reno/Sparks Convention Center, 4590 S. Virginia St., Reno
The Jackpot of Gems has been held in the Reno area for over 50 years. The show is put on to educate people who have an interest in minerals and gems that are so abundant in our State. RGMS members display over 30 cases of rocks, gems, and minerals. There are demonstrations showing how to make some of the beautiful things shown in the Display Cases. There is a booth high-lighting fluorescent features of some minerals that has been called "nature's light show". Expect to learn something new about rocks and minerals in the State of Nevada. It is a fun hobby to learn about and the Show is enjoyable for the entire family. There will be raffle tickets available for fabulous prizes. The Wheel of Fortune is a special place for children who spin the wheel to win fun rock and gem specimens. We also have a new Kids Corner with rock painting and a scavenger hunt. There are great bargains available in beads and minerals in the silent auction held every thirty minutes. Come join us!
Contact: (775) 229-4420, sailondan55@aol.com
Website: www.renogms.org

September 16-17, 2023 – Monterey, CA

Carmel Valley Gem & Mineral Society
Monterey Fairgrounds, Monterey, CA
Hours: 10 AM – 5 PM
Contact: (831) 801-5887, susieharlow@gmail.com
Website: <http://cvgms.rock>

September 16-17, 2023 – San Luis Obispo, CA

San Luis Obispo Gem and Mineral Club
San Luis Obispo Veteran's Memorial Building, 801 Grand Avenue, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
Gems by the Sea Show. Admission: \$5, Children 12 and under Free. Free parking.
Contact: 2023show@slogem.org
Website: <http://slogem.org>

October 7-8, 2023 – Signal Hill, CA

Long Beach Mineral & Gem Society
Signal Hill Library, 1800 E. Hill Street, Signal Hill, CA 90755
"Gems on the Hill" Annual Show
Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM = 4 PM
Contact: (562) 253-1390, lbmineralgemsociety@gmail.com
Website: <http://www.facebook.com/LBMGS>

October 7-8, 2023 – Grass Valley, CA

Nevada County Gem and Mineral Society
Nevada County Fairgrounds, 11228 McCourtney Rd., Grass Valley 95949
Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM
57th Annual Earth's Treasures Show: 25+ vendors, gem and mineral exhibits, Gold panning, lapidary arts demonstrations. Kids Corner, food and ice cream trucks. Admissions – Adults \$4, Children ages 12 and under free with a paid adult, Military with an "active military" I.D. Free, FREE PARKING
Contact: 4vanclan5@att.net

October 7-8, 2023 – Anderson, CA

Shasta Gem and Mineral Society
67th Annual Gem and Mineral Show
1890 Briggs Street, Anderson, CA 96007
Hours: Saturday 9 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 9 AM – 4 PM
FREE! 67th Annual Gem and Mineral Show, Jewelry, Crystals, Minerals, Fossils, Gemstones, Silent Auction, Exhibits, Kids Area
Contact: sgmsrocksredding@gmail.com
Website: <http://shastagemandmineral.org>

October 8, 2023 – Fallbrook, CA

Fallbrook Gem and Mineral Society
123 W. Alvarado St. (show on street a& in parking lot), Fallbrook CA 92028
Hours: 9 AM – 4 PM
Rock Fallbrook! Over 40 mineral gemstone, jewelry and fossil vendors at the annual Fallbrook Festival of Gems & Minerals. Gem ID, Bargain Booth, Wheel of Fortune, kids activities, food booth, and a GIANT raffle of some gorgeous items. Free admission and free parking.
Vendor applications due August 1, 2023. Email info@fgms.org if you're interested.
Contact: (760) 728-1130, info@fgms.org
Website: <http://www.fgms.org>

October 14-15, 2023 – Redwood City, CA

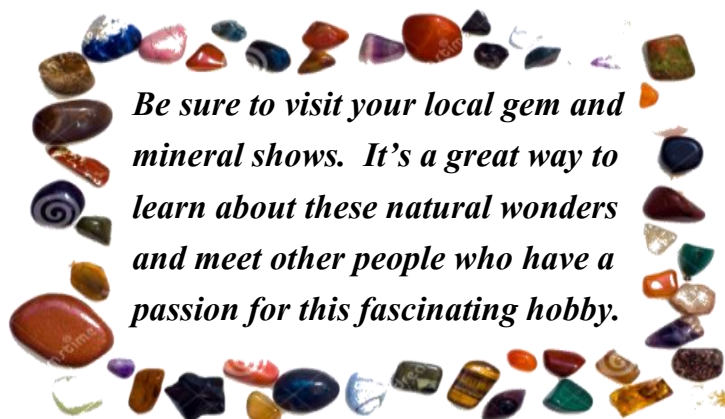
Penninsula Gem and Geology Society AND Sequoia Gem and Mineral Society
Redwood City Community Activities Building, 1400 Rosevelt Ave., Redwood City, CA 94061
Hours: 10 AM – 5 PM
Contact: (650) 575-3144, cci@pacbell.net
Website: <http://sequoiagemandmineralsociety.org>

October 21-22, 2023 – Santa Rosa, CA

Santa Rosa Mineral & Gem Society
Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Building, 1351 Maple Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95404
Hours: Saturday and Sunday – 10 AM – 5 PM
Annual show featuring 35 vendors, gold panning, florescent mineral display, children's activities, raffle prizes, on-going silent auction, member displays. FREE Parking
Contact: (707) 849-9551, jolene4srmgs@gmail.com
Website: <http://srmgs.org>

October 21, 2023 – West Hills, CA

Woodland Hills Rock Chippers
First United Methodist Church, 22700 Sherman Way, West Hills, CA 91307
Twenty Fourth Annual Gem Show
Hours: 10 AM – 5 PM
Contact: whrc@rockchippers.org
Website: www.rockchippers.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 9

— GENERAL MEETINGS —

3rd Thursday of the Month
6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Anaheim Community Center
250 E. Center Street
Anaheim, CA 92805



TO:



Meeting – September 21st
at the Anaheim Community Center

Social Time: 6:30 p.m.

General Meeting - Call to Order: 7:00 p.m.



General Meeting Location at:

Anaheim Downtown Community Center

250 E. Center Street
Anaheim, CA 92805

Next meeting will be Thursday, September 21st, at the
Anaheim Downtown Community Center

→ Social Time: 6:30 p.m. ←
General Meeting - Call to Order: 7:00 p.m.

American Opal Society

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

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