

The Opal Express

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Happy Saint Patrick's Day

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President's Message

Happy St. Patrick's Day, Opalholics!

I hope everyone will be enjoying corned beef and cabbage for St. Patrick's Day, and don't forget to wear a four-leaf clover for good luck!

We have several events coming up that we need your help with. It would be so nice to have some new members help out with these events, if you can. They're fun and educational! If you would like to help out, please contact Veronica Purpura for more details.

As far as meetings go, we have procured a video machine and hope to share opal videos at our meetings. To see these videos and learn more, come to a meeting!

Stan McCall
AOS President
Custom Creative Gem Cutting





Did You Know?

The three-leaf clover, a type of trefoil plant, has been considered the unofficial national flower of Ireland for centuries. Irish legend says that Saint Patrick used the shamrock as an educational symbol to explain the Holy Trinity to nonbelievers as he converted the Irish to Christianity in the fourth century.

Source: Google



It's Imaginology Time Again!!

Come join AOS members and support this very worthwhile event! We will have coloring pages, mineral touch displays, a ponking table where Russ demonstrates breaking open basalt rock from Mojave Desert to pry out opal pieces, and more!

If you would like to help out, please contact Veronica Purpura for more details. Parking passes will be made available to all helpers!



Anaheim Children's Festival

Join us at this one day event at the beautiful Pearson Park in Anaheim. AOS members will be educating children about our favorite gemstone – Opal! There will be coloring pages, stamps, information posters and Russ will be there with his famous ponking table!

We are in need of a few more volunteers! If you would like to help out, please contact Veronica Purpura for more details.



FREE EVENT!

Saturday, May 18, 2024 • 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Pearson Park

Lemon St. & Sycamore St. – Anaheim

The Anaheim Children's Festival offers families and people of all ages the opportunity to enjoy exploring and making art together. The Children's Festival includes booths, art projects, musical and performing groups, and plenty of fun for kids and families! All art activities are **FREE** to all participants!



The Anaheim Children's Festival has been going strong for 32 years and it continues to grow under the umbrella of the Muzeo Museum and their commitment to the children of the Orange County area.

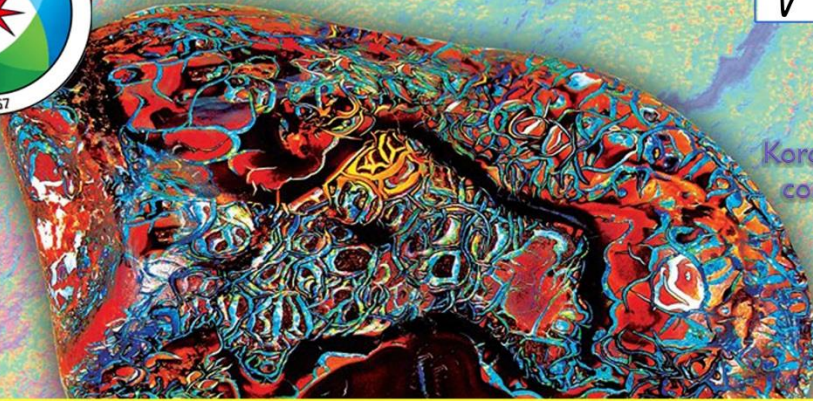
The Anaheim Children's Festival is presented by the Muzeo Museum and Cultural Center and the City of Anaheim, and will be celebrated on Saturday, May 18 from 11:00 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Pearson Park in Anaheim. Keep watching this space for additional information as we get closer to the event!



Join us for the 54th Annual Opal Show



the
Velvet Rose



Koroit Opal photo
compliments of
Len Cram

54th Annual Opal Show
October 26-27, 2024
Velvet Rose Event Center



American Opal Society proudly presents **54th Annual OPAL, GEM & JEWELRY SHOW**

October 26th & 27th, 2024

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!

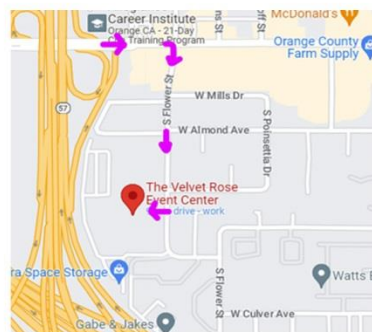
ADMISSION \$5.00 ADULTS

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.



Famous Opals - The Red Cosmos

It often happens that great stones are not always found by the original claim holder. There are many stories where the second or third owner has found a great stone in the patch. The discovery of "Red Cosmos" is one of them. It all happened on 9 July 1988 at one of the new Carter's rushes. The area had originally been discovered in 1970 by Art Carter, an enterprising American businessman, who had fallen in love with opal. Although not related, two miners by the name of Baker bought the claim after the original owners believed there was none of the patch left they had been working on.



The Red Cosmos after being rubbed when first found.

Little more than half the claim had been worked when they took it over, and except for a long slide that the original owners had driven through and found nothing, no interest had been taken in it. With their experience, they worked parallel along the slide for 15 ft. getting opal almost all the way and wondering how the original owners could have possibly missed it. They had been digging out opal for days, when one morning an incredible gem fell out of the wall at their feet. They were astonished by the size and brightness of the stone, even before they had picked it up.

It was the thickness of the colour bar that attracted their attention and on close examination they found that it was also naturally jointed. There was another piece,

but where was it? Looking up, they saw the other piece looking at them in the wall where they had been working, still embedded in the slide. It looked so beautiful sitting there in its natural state they said that they wished they'd had camera to record it.

The excitement was too much, even for experienced miners like them, and they called it a day. They had found a once in a lifetime gem. Up in the daylight the colours almost mesmerized them and they were little better when they first brought the two pieces to me to be photographed. They wanted a record of the gems in the rough as they had come out of the ground, and after cutting, they came back on two occasions to have them photographed.



The Red Cosmos after finishing.

I must admit that at first I didn't share their optimism as to both of the stones cutting so clean, with so little loss, although I never said as much. I didn't want to dampen their spirits. Had I done so I would have been proved wrong. They cut two beautiful clean stones. The grey scum that often covers the top of such gems lifted as clean as a whistle, exposing broad red ribbon like patterns flowing across the large stone and to a lesser extent, smaller ones across the other piece. The final weight of both pieces was 725 carats and they were bought by a well known German dealer for an undisclosed sum.

From "A Journey with Colour; A History of Lightning Ridge Opal, 1873-2003" By Len Cram.

Phenomenal Opal

One of America's finest gems comes to light

December 1999

by Robert Weldon, G.G. Gemstones & Pearls: News

When Thomas Ames sat down to carve one of the largest and finest opals mined from Opal Butte, OR, you can only speculate about his state of mind. A seasoned glyptic artist, Ames was about to use his particular technique of sand-blasting a gemstone – masking off strategic areas, blasting, remasking and so on – until the opal yielded to the varying depths and contours of the Cattleya-laelia orchid design he wanted to create.



272-ct. opal from Opal Butte, OR, was carved by Thomas Ames. Photographed with transmitted light, this opal reveals that it is the contra-luz variety

But this wasn't a normal opal. First, it was huge – over one pound of rough. It also had an unusual quality. "It was unlike Australian material, which is opaque and shows its play of color in reflected light," says Ames. "This piece had a clarity I've never seen in opal before; I could see through it, and the fantastic play of color dazzled me."

The opal also has some interesting rounded orange clouds that some gemologists speculate are concentrations of microscopic iron oxide stains, similar or identical to the colors seen in cherry opals.

Ames says the opal is of the contra-luz variety, the Spanish phrase meaning "against the light." The opal composition (microscopic, tightly packed silica spheres) diffracts reflected and transmitted light, resulting in red, orange, green, blue and violet flashes and pinpoints of color. This composition creates an ebb and flow to the colors as the gem is rotated and angled in relation to light.

In addition to the opal's composition, Ames considered its general outline. "Cut just right," he says, "it has a rainbow-opal effect." (Rainbow opals typically change body color entirely, depending on how light is angled in relation to the gemstones.)

Award-Winning Result

What resulted from Ames' tireless efforts was the 272-ct. opal carving shown here. The gem won a first-place honor in the American Gem Trade Association Cutting Edge competition this year (see Professional Jeweler, October 1999, p. 62).

"It was the largest piece mined at the Blue Mountain range in Oregon until just last year," says Ames. "Now a 2-pound piece of pure transparent opal has been cut from the matrix, though it remains unfashioned."

Almost 2000 years ago, naturalist and philosopher Pliny the Elder pondered the virtues of opal. He wrote in his epic Natural History volumes: "There is in them a softer fire than in the carbuncle [garnet]: there is the brilliant purple of the amethyst; there is the sea-green of the emerald – all shining together in incredible union."

It's an appropriate salute to Pliny two millennia later. A singular opal, from a world unknown to him, that perfectly matches his contemplations.

Source: Thomas Ames, Arvada, CO; (303) 424-3772.
Copyright © 1999 by Bond Communications.

~ 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

DRILLING A STONE

by Brad Smith

One of the things my students often ask to do is drill a hole through a piece of gemstone. The usual thought is to get a diamond drill, but I've been disappointed with the results.

I think the reason is that the tip of the drill is just pivoting in the hole and fails to cut well. When it looks like the drill isn't cutting, the tendency is to push with more force. The drill gets hot, and the diamond grit falls off.

A much better approach is to use a core drill. This is a small hollow tube with a coating of diamond grit at the business end. The diamonds easily carve out a circular arc without undue pressure or heat buildup.

Core drills are readily available from lapidary and jewelry supply companies. They come in sizes as small as 1mm and are very reasonable in price. For instance, a 2mm diameter drill is about \$6.

Chuck the core drill in a drill press, Dremel or Foredom and be sure to keep the drilling zone wet to cool the tool and to flush out debris. If you're drilling a through hole, remember to ease up on the pressure as the drill is about to cut through. Otherwise you will usually chip off some of the stone surface around the exit hole.



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.

March 1-3, 2024 – Newark, CA

The Mineral and Gem Society of Castro Valley
Newark Pavillion, 6430 Thornton Ave., Newark CA
Hours: Friday 11 AM – 5 PM, Saturday 10 AM – 6 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 5 PM
75th annual Mineral Gem and Jewelry Show and sale. 40+ dealers selling everything used in the lapidary arts, exhibits, demonstrations, minerals. Live auction on Saturday
Website: <http://mgscv.org>

March 2-3, 2024 – Ventura, CA

Ventura Gem & Mineral Society
Ventura Co. Fairgrounds, 10 W. Harbor Blvd., Ventura CA
Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM-4PM
Dealers and exhibits, demos, gold panning, kids activities, raffle & silent auctions, Country Store an plant sale, free resources for teachers. A SoCal tradition for 60+ years.
Contact: (805) 312-8467, info@vgms.org
Website: <http://www.vgms.org>

March 8-10, 2024 – Victorville, CA (Stoddard Wells area)

Victor Valley Gem and Mineral Club
Stoddard Wells Tailgate. Take I-15 toward Barstow EXIT #157 stay on Stoddard Wells Road. Follow the signs 7 miles to Tailgate. GPS 34.671852347, -117-117133037
Hours: 9 AM – 5 PM daily 48th Annual Stoddard Wells Tailgate.
This annual event is Free to vendors and visitors. Vendors offering slabs and cabs, findings and equipment, minerals and fossils, faceted and handcrafted jewelry, and lots of rough material. A family field trip to marble collecting site on Saturday from 9 A to 1 PM.
Contact: (760) 243-2339, president@vvgc.org
Website: <http://vvgmc.org>

March 9-10, 2024 – Turlock, CA

Mother Lode Mineral Society of CA
Stanislaus County Fairgrounds, 900 North Broadway, Turlock, CA
Hours: Saturday and Sunday 10 AM – 5 PM
Mother Lode Mineral Society presents the 58th Annual Turlock Rock & Gem Show. Our theme this year is JADE.
Also featuring Mizzie the Velociraptor, Rocks, Minerals & Fossils, Gold Panning, Big Fluorescent Room, Touch and See Table, Kids Activities and shopping from the wonderful Vendors. Admission \$8 – 12 and under free with paid adult. Free Parking.
Contact: see web site
Website: <http://www.turlockgemshow.com>

March 16-17, 2024, San Jose, CA

Santa Clara Valley Gem & Mineral Society
Santa Clara County Fairgrounds, 344 Tully Road, San Jose, CA 95111
Hours: Saturday and Sunday 10 AM – 5 PM
Educational exhibits, rocks that glow in the dark, how to make arrowheads and other demonstrations. Free to active duty, retired military, military dependents and first responders with valid ID. Children under 12 free with adult. Adults \$8. Save \$2 when you buy on-line at <http://www.scvgms.org>. Free parking.
Contact: s(408) 265-1422, info@scvgms.org
Website: facebook.com/santaclaravalleygemandmineralsociety or <http://www.scvgms.org>

March 16-17, 2024 – Lemoore, CA

Lemoore Gem & Mineral Society
Trinity Hall, 470 Champion St., Lemoore, CA 93245
Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 6 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM
Lemoore Gem, Mineral and Jewelry Show – We have vendors from California and several other states that are selling jewelry, fossils, lapidary rough rocks, carvings, and kids activities involving rocks. An excellent show for anyone who is interested in rocks and jewelry.
Contact:
https://facebook.com/events/999726084444006/999726087777339/?active_tape=about

March 17, 2024 – Fallbrook, CA

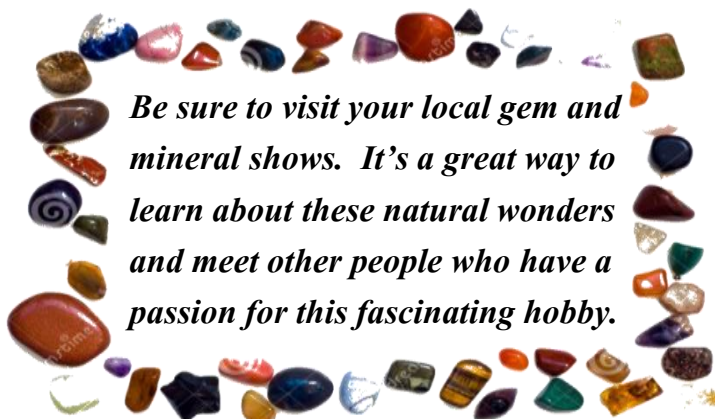
Fallbrook Gem and Mineral Society
123 West Alvarado St., Ste B, Fallbrook, CA 92028
Hours: 12 Noon – 3 PM
Annual Rough and Cut Club clearance sale of specimen, lapidary and misc. garden rock.
Contact: (760) 728-1130, info@fgms.org
Website: <http://www.fgms.org>

March 22-24, 2024 – Clovis, CA

Fresno Gem and Mineral Society
748 Rodeo Dr., Clovis, CA 93612
Hours: Friday & Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM
The 4th Annual Central Valley Gem & Mineral Show, sponsored by the Fresno Gem and Mineral Society, presents a great show for viewing, learning about and purchasing minerals, fossils, gems, beautiful handmade jewelry and much more!
Website: <https://fgms.rocks/>

March 23-24, 2024 – Angeles Camp, CA

Calaveras Gem and Mineral Society
2465 Gun Club Rd., Angeles Camp CA 95222
Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM
Annual Calaveras Gem and Mineral Show: Adults \$5.00, Children under 12 FREE with paying adult. Amazing displays, vendors and demonstrations, silent auction, Fun and interesting activities for children. Treasure Hunt, Door Prizes! Food on sit. FREE PARKING. Great Fun.
Contact: (209) 736-4892, dbrooks49@att.net
Website: <http://CalaverasGemandMineral.net>



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 57, Issue 3

— 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 – Thursday, March 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, March 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>
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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