

# The Opal Express

Published  
monthly by  
The  
American  
Opal  
Society

April 2024

Volume 57 Issue 4



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| President's Message               | 1 |
| Members Only Password             | 1 |
| Did You Know?                     | 1 |
| It's Imaginology Time Again!      | 2 |
| Anaheim Children's Festival       | 3 |
| 54 <sup>th</sup> Annual Opal Show | 4 |
| Our Greatest Respect for Trees    | 5 |
| Bench Tips                        | 7 |
| Upcoming Events                   | 8 |

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## President's Message

Greetings Opalholics!

I hope everyone had an enjoyable Easter in between the rain drops!

Due to the length of our business portion of last month's meeting, we were not able to watch our scheduled video, "What To Do In Lightning Ridge". We are hoping to show it at the April meeting. We hope you all will join us!

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.

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: DFrac47&

\*\*\*\*\*

## Did You Know?

April was the second month in an early Roman calendar, but became the fourth when the ancient Romans started using January as the first month.

April is named for the Greek goddess of love, Aphrodite.

Small animals that hibernate are usually coming out of their burrows in April. The birds fly back northward and settle down to have their families. The bees and butterflies begin to gather nectar from the first flowers of the season

In some parts of the world, it is planting time, while in other parts, it is the harvest season.

April is Humor Month, so laugh it up!

The birthstone for April is the diamond.

The zodiac signs are Aries (March 21 – April 19) and Taurus (April 20-May 20).

The birth flowers for the month of April are the sweet pea and the daisy.

Source:  
<https://www.americantraininginc.com/aprilfacts/>

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# 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 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Opal Show



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

Koroit Opal photo  
compliments of  
Len Cram



## *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!

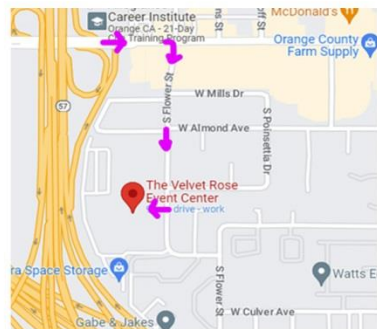
**ADMISSION \$5.00 ADULTS**

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](mailto: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.



# Our Greatest Respect for Trees

by Mary Aracic

as told to AOS editor, Kathleen James

This story was first printed in the Opal Express in April 2021 – thank you Mary and Stephen.

We ask the question on Page 329 of our book, “Rediscover Opals in Australia”, do you know the botanical name of this interesting floral tree beside the Opalton-Winton Road? And to our amazement the answer came in a letter from a couple who live in Tucson, Arizona - Stephen and Phyllis. Stephen, who bought our book at the “Tucson Gem and Mineral Show”, from Sally Patel of “True Blue Opals”.

The floral tree referred to is an *Erythrina Vespertilio*, in the Legume family. It's most common name is Bat Wing, derived from the shape of the leaves. It also has a native name,



*Erythrina Vespertilio* or Bat Wing  
Photo courtesy of en.wikipedia.org



Bat wing shaped leaves of the *Erythrina Vespertilio*  
Photo courtesy of: TopTropicals.com

“Yulbah” the species is scattered around in Queensland and the Northern Territory, as well as parts of Western Australia.

Although the flowers are red or orange-red, this tree can be rather inconspicuous when it's out of flower. It does have a nice looking corky bark. The seeds are sometimes over 15mm long and vary from red to orange to yellow. Occasionally they are used for making jewellery by women who collect the seeds. Of course even the most impressive *Erythrina* seed jewellery isn't as spectacular as gem-quality opals. But opal is such an illusive gem to find that attention to certain native trees, as a good indicator of opal bearing ground is required. These are Wild Orange trees and Box Gum trees, the bigger and more scattered over the area the better. Box Gum trees are not always evident in some productive fields were a number of Wild Orange trees are scattered though! But then again, there are Wild Orange trees where opal was not produced, the same can be said for a lot of faults down below that do not carry opal. But the potential is there and such ground should be investigated.

The Wild Orange trees bears an edible fruit full of seeds. It has a very strong tap root system that extends from the base in search of cracks in the ground. This very clever tree is a great indicator of a fault line. If there is no convenient fault for it to penetrate after moisture, the tap root searches in a radius of a couple of metres to find one, even in rocky ground.

*Continued on page 6*

The tap root can often be seen deep down in the opal level, where the moisture keeps it thriving. Stephen has seen the tap root wrapped around a broken drill bit.

The Wild Orange tree is a natural survivor of Australia’s harsh environment, even in times of drought. Seeds scattered by birds germinate in times of rain and thrive for years. They die off in drought if the tap root does not reach a fault line. They are also found in Queensland opal country. Much the same conditions apply to Box Gum trees.

Many years ago, Stephen hand-sunk a shaft at the Four Mile near a Wild Orange tree. The roots went down to a depth of 17 metres between the rock joints, through a split or crack. It was interesting to see the roots continue all the way to the opal level.

There was a small fault below and some traces of opal, though nothing of gem value. Just watery looking blue patch. But a friend, Ian Simmons, got gem opal in shallower ground in his claim next to Stephen. In many other areas though, there were Wild Orange trees growing over the fault area where he found opal.

Then there was a Wild Orange tree on his claim at Vertical Bill’s. He sank a shaft beside it and bottomed on gem opal worth around \$15,000.

There is yet another native tree worth a mention, but don’t know its name. This rough looking brush tree is full of long sticks and no leaves. It grows in shallow ground of opal bearing regions. Belah trees are also a good indication, especially where they grow in clusters. A Lone Pine first drew his attention to where a patch of opal was found in a claim at the Four Mile. It grew directly over the patch.

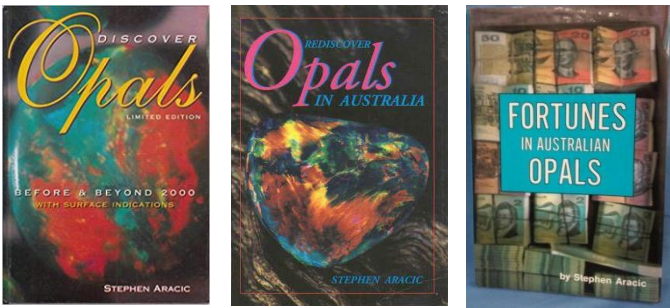
In some areas of the Ridge, Box Gum trees or Wild Orange trees are absent. Not all the surface indications are always together in a

particular location. Nor do they have to be. Needless to say, our greatest respect for trees lies in their welfare, as birds nest in them and they are home to the Koala population.



Wild Orange Tree  
Photo courtesy of  
<https://keys.lucicentral.org>

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.

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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](mailto: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.

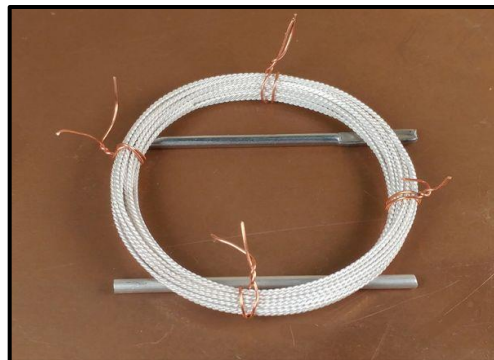
But for those with no oven, here's how I use a scrap of thick sheet metal and an old tuna fish can to build my own "oven" and avoid melting delicate items when annealing.

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.



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](mailto:info@opalsociety.org). Upcoming Event listings will be included at the discretion of The Opal Express editor as space and scheduling permit.

## **April 6-7, 2024 – Vista, CA**

Vista Gem and Mineral Society

Antique Gas and Steam Engine Museum, 2040 N. Santa Fe Ave., Vista, CA 92083

Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM

Come on out to our Annual Gem and Mineral show at the Antique Gas and Engine Museum. This is an outdoors event with lots of gem and mineral dealers as well as an artist's alley with finished jewelry and other related items. We have a food truck so you can make a day of it. This is a free event. Check out our raffle and see our awesome vendors we have.

Contact: [info@vistarocks.org](mailto:info@vistarocks.org)

Website: <https://vistarocks.org/>

## **April 13, 2024 – Lake Elsinore, CA**

Lake Elsinore Gem & Mineral Society

32097 Corydon Road, Lake Elsinore, CA 92530

4th Annual Lake Elsinore Spring Rock & Craft Show

Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 4 PM

Contact: (909) 208-6956, [berylman50@aol.com](mailto:berylman50@aol.com)

## **April 13-14, 2024 – Mariposa, CA**

Mariposa Gem and Mineral Club

Mariposa County Fairgrounds, 5007 Fairgrounds Rd., Mariposa, CA 95338

Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM

We'll have a great selection of vendors with all sorts of gems, minerals, fossils, rough lapidary material and many other rock-related items, a fabulous raffle, silent auction, geode cutting, and, of course, food...

Website: <http://mariposagemclub.org>

## **April 13-14, 2024 – Placerville, CA**

El Dorado County Mineral and Gem Society

El Dorado County Fairgrounds, Placerville, CA

Hours: Saturday 10 AM - 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM

Contact: (530) 676-2472, [office@edcmgs.org](mailto:office@edcmgs.org)

Website: <http://edcmgs.org>

## **April 20-21, 2024 – Thousand Oaks, CA**

Conejo Valley Gem & Mineral Club

Borchard Park Community Center, 190 N. Reino Rd., Thousand Oaks, CA 91320

Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM

"Pageant of a Thousand Gems" – 47th Annual Show

The event is FREE – no charge for parking or entry

The Show includes: members' display of personal collections or projects, demonstrations of skills and tools used in lapidary arts, vendors selling specimens of minerals, rocks, gems and jewelry, activities for kids to enjoy and learn from with prizes, a silent auction with a selection of specimens, door prizes and a plant sale.

Contact: (805) 209-3173, [conejogemandmineral@gmail.com](mailto:conejogemandmineral@gmail.com)

Website: <http://www.cgamc.org>

## **April 27-28, 2024 – Santa Cruz, CA**

Santa Cruz Mineral and Gem Society

307 Church St., Santa Cruz, Ca 95060. Corner of Church and Center Streets

Hours: Saturday, 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM

Our Spring show has a large variety of vendors selling finished jewelry, gem stones, lapidary supplies and rough stone, fossils, mineral specimens, stone carvings and many other things of interest to 'rockhounds'. In addition, there is a rock identification table, display cases containing examples of items collected or made by club members, geode cutting, Pick-Your-Prize opportunity drawing, and a Treasure Wheel. Admission is \$7. \$1 off with show advertisement. Scouts in uniform free. Children under 12 free with paying adult.

## **April 27 – 28, 2024 – Anaheim, CA**

Searchers Gem and Mineral Society

Brookhurst Community Center, 2271 W. Crescent Ave., Anaheim, CA 92801

Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4:30 PM

This show features displays of members work, demonstrations by Searchers (and some of our friends) of lapidary work, stone carving, jewelry making, wire wrap, faceting and many other rock and jewelry related skills. There is a children's jewelry area where children can make a piece of jewelry and take it home, and a wheel of fortune. There are many dealers with their rock and jewelry related wares, and the best silent auction around.

Contact: [nancybird68@gmail.com](mailto:nancybird68@gmail.com)

Website: <https://www.searchersrocks.org>

## **April 27-28, 2024 – Paradise, CA 95967**

Paradise Gem & Mineral Club

475 Pearson Road, Paradise, CA 95967

NorCal UNEARTHED – Paradise Gem and Mineral Club's 68th Annual Gem and Mineral Show. Come and join us for a weekend full of prizes, auctions, raffles, a kids zone, food vendors, demos, geode cracking and shopping!

This year is going to be our BIGGEST show yet!! You won't want to miss this...please invite your rock loving friends and family. . We can't wait to see you.

Vendor Contact: [paradisegemmineral@gmail.com](mailto:paradisegemmineral@gmail.com)

## **May 3-4, 2024 – Yucaipa, CA**

Yucaipa Valley Gem & Mineral Society

Show will be held on Yucaipa Blvd near Adams Street, Yucaipa CA 92399

Hours: Friday 5 PM – 10 PM, Saturday noon – 9 PM

YVGMS annual show held in conjunction with the city of Yucaipa Music and Arts Festival (YMAF). The YVGMS show will include 15 dealers, kids activities, club store, geode cracker, and a great raffle. YMAF will have name bands both nights, other arts and crafts dealers and food, beer and wine booths. Great for the whole family.

Contact: [grandpasgems@gmail.com](mailto:grandpasgems@gmail.com)

Website: <https://www.yvgms.org/>

## **May 4-5, 2024 – Lancaster**

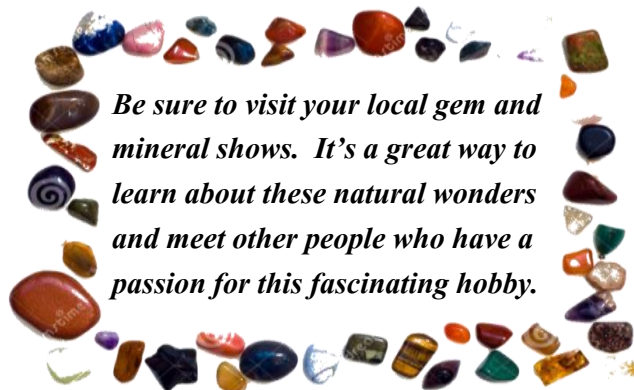
Antelope Valley Gem & Mineral Club

2551 W Ave. H, Lancaster, CA 93536

Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM

AVGMC Rock, Jewelry and Gem Show. Parking and Admission are free. Plenty of vendors, displays and activities for the whole family.

Contact: [marylandorile@gmail.com](mailto:marylandorile@gmail.com)



*Be sure to visit your local gem and mineral shows. It's a great way to learn about these natural wonders and meet other people who have a passion for this fascinating hobby.*

# American Opal Society Membership Application

| FILL IN APPLICABLE INFORMATION                                                  |                  | DUES / FEES | AMOUNT PAID |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|
| DUES:                                                                           | RENEWING MEMBERS | \$35.00     |             |
| SELECT ONE                                                                      | NEW MEMBERS      | \$45.00     |             |
| INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP FEE (All addresses <u>outside</u> of USA)              |                  | \$15.00     |             |
| PRINTED NEWSLETTER FEE (Paper copy postal mailed instead of PDF file by e-mail) |                  | \$10.00     |             |
| ADDITIONAL BADGES (Your first badge is <u>free</u> when joining)                |                  | \$15.00     |             |
| TOTAL PAID DUES plus International, Print or Badge Fees if Applicable:          |                  |             |             |

Please make check or money order payable to "American Opal Society". Mail payment and application to:

American Opal Society: PO Box 4875, Garden Grove, CA 92842-4875

An optional quicker method of payment is via the internet. To pay via PayPal, please visit the membership page on our website at [http://opalsociety.org/aos\\_application\\_by\\_web.htm](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](mailto: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 4

## — GENERAL MEETINGS —

3<sup>rd</sup> 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, April 18th  
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, April 18<sup>th</sup> 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](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCegTIH1IEyO7y8wdqvRfyUA?view_as=subscriber)

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