

The Opal Express

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American
Opal
Society

May 2024

Volume 57 Issue 5

Happy
Mother's Day

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President's Message

Greetings Opalholics!

I hope everyone is enjoying the great weather we've had lately – summer is just around the corner!

Please join us at our next meeting – May 16th and bring your opals to share with the group! We love to hear about your collections and what your plans are for your opals. Are you making jewelry or just collecting?

We have one more event coming up this month that we need your help with. It would be so nice to have some new members help out with these events, if you can. These events are 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&



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

Terry Toney

Thank you Terry for joining the American Opal Society!

Did You Know?

May Day has changed throughout history. In Greek and Roman times it was a day to celebrate spring and specifically the goddesses over spring. In early Gaelic times as well as in pre-Christian times in Scandinavia, May Day was also a day to celebrate the coming of Spring.

Source: Google

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!

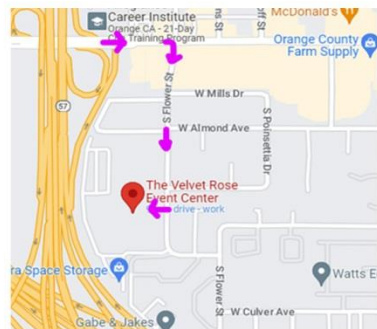
ADMISSION \$5.00 ADULTS

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.



Opal Amongst the Gold in Western Australia

by Mary Aracic

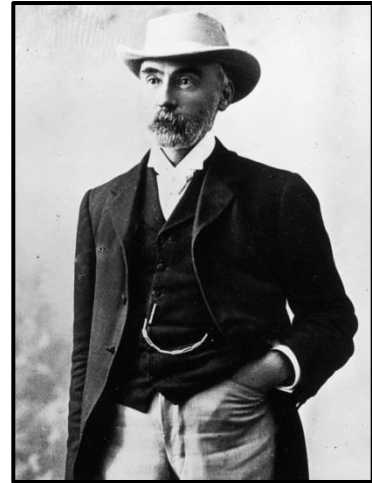
as told to AOS editor, Kathleen James

Now well you may ask, “What has gold got to do with opal?” Surprisingly a lot! Mother Nature, in her wisdom, deposited opal amongst the gold. Way back in 1904, prospectors digging for gold discovered opal, but the deposit only lasted a year and they went back digging for gold.

Imagine the surprise when Arthur Baley rode into town and deposited 554 ounces of gold with the Mining Warden, that he and his partner, William Ford had found. Within hours the frenzied rush to Coolgardie began and it was one of the greatest mass movements of people in Australia’s history.

They came by bicycle, dray or foot, living standards were poor, food scarce and water more precious than gold. Flies were terrible and diseases such as dysentery and typhoid wiped out countless people. Thousands died of thirst or from contaminated water. Coolgardie cemetery is testimony to the many who died under the age of 26. Very few people lived beyond 40 years.

It wasn’t until 1903 that things improved on the fields. A brilliant engineer, C.Y. O’Connor, devised a scheme to lay a 563 km pipeline from Mundering Weir near Perth to the gold fields. Imagine the scene, people standing around waiting for water to flow. But it didn’t. Criticism of this scheme did flow non-stop, however, to the point that O’Connor, unable to cope any longer, tragically shot himself in a state of deep depression. No one allowed for the time it would take for the water to flow that long distance. It came within 48 hours. Water still flows from the same Weir, through the pipes have since been renewed.



C. Y. O'Connor

Photo courtesy of:

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/archive/d/hindsight/watering-the-west/3975610>



Photo courtesy of:

<https://www.monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/people/government---state/display/60627-c.-y.-o%60connor->

The mine where opal was found is close to the Coolgardie-Kalgoorie Railway and the main road. Way back in 1969, Chris Savage, who had made an open cut over the old working, was surprised to unearth a blob-like nobby the size of a hen’s egg and was amazed to find it contained brilliant opal.

Continued on page 5

But when he saw a nest of them in a pillar, he decided to leave the precious opal, blob-like nobby on a ledge near the small bulldozer, while he dug them out. It was when he broke into a well-worked ballroom area that he came to the end of the blobs.

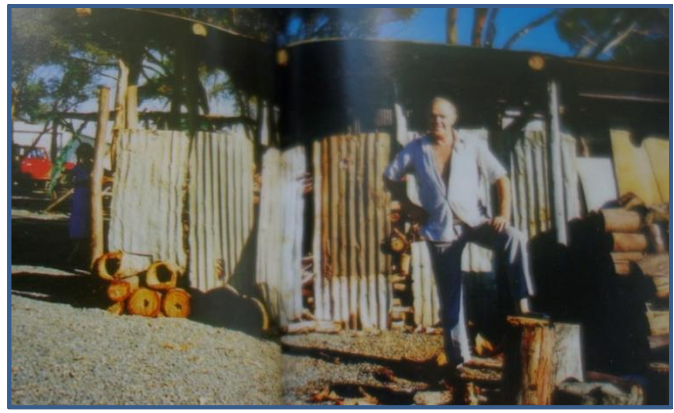


Open cut over the old working.

Still shocked by discovering opal amongst the gold, Chris completely forgot about the blob-like nobby on the ledge and reversed over it with the bulldozer, shattering it into several pieces. The blob was said to be worth \$50,000.

The lease became abandoned until along came Peter Milic, who knew all about opal mining from time spent in Andamooka and Cooberpedy in South Australia. He had also mined in Lightning Ridge and the fields around Winton, Longreach and Eulo in Queensland, where he made a modest living.

Peter realized the potential of the lease and when it finally lapsed, took out a 24 acre lease. Peter was the only one in Western Australia mining for opal in gold country and making a living from it. His lease being amongst several gold leases. One of them, the famous rich Eldorado Mine, only a kilometre away.



Peter Milic at his mine camp site, Three Mile Hill.

In 1995, Stephen and I took a wonderful train trip on the Indian Pacific from Sydney Central Station across Nullarbor Plain to Perth in Western Australia. A distance of 3,290 km taking four days and three nights to get to Perth, and a further distance of 554 km by road to Coolgardie.

We visited Peter in his air-conditioned, relocatable modern home. To our amazement, we knew Peter from his mining days in Lightning Ridge. He had a very comfortable camp and facilities for cutting and polishing his opal finds on the Three Mile Hill overlooking the mine site.

The opal is brilliant in dazzling colors of red, orange, green and blue in a pattern of medium to fine. It looks great in sunshine or shade. Rock impurities in some of the medium stones look quite attractive, but gem opal on black basalt rock backing, free of impurities, is classed as top quality opal. The thickness of the opal bar can be up to 5mm and does not alter the value.

Peter Milic had the advantage of being able to mine for more than just opal in his lease. Gold could be deeper down. Where else in Australia would you find a treasure trove of assorted gems amongst the gold and nickel? The prospects of find gem quality opal in many parts of Western Australia looks good.

Continued on page 6

One of Peter’s best finds was a huge opal weighing 16.5 kg. Valuers in Perth estimated the specimen to be worth \$5.6 million. But it was too hard to sell and was eventually cut into a parcel of stones in Adelaide. Western Australian opal is similar in structure to Queensland Boulder Opal or Tintinbar Opal. The region is comprised of “thin-bedded metamorphosed graphite shales and tuff beds within amphibolite, the whole Archaean Sequence having been concordantly intruded by quartz porphyry precious opal, Western Australia”, 1976 by R. R. Connolly. Therefore stress in the opal bearing ground was released long ago.

According to sources in Coolgardie, the opal was tested for stability by gemology experts in Perth and was found to be a non-cracky type. It passed the stress test. Very little is known about this beautiful opal mined in Coolgardie.

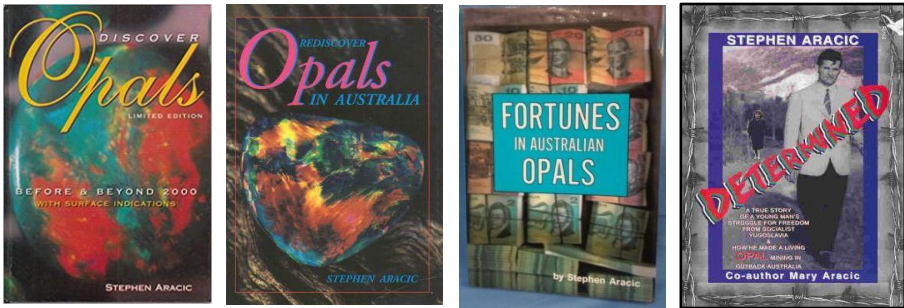
In conclusion, there is certainly a variety of opals in Western Australia. But the ground is so hard that blasting must be done to mine for it. Opal appears to favor cross-section faults and can be found anywhere up to the surface. However, gold mining is more favoured than opal mining.

When commercial opal fields are exhausted in New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia, the black opal of West Australia may be worth prospecting and mining for new deposits. A host of minerals are mined



in Western Australia, including diamonds, emeralds, gold and nickel. Most intriguing of all is the occurrence of opal amongst them. Opals found there cover most varieties, other than precious opal. Most of the common opal is opaque and not so attractive. But many varieties with colouration and patterning cut and polish well into attractive stones for jewellery to colour our world.

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.

~ Bench Tips ~

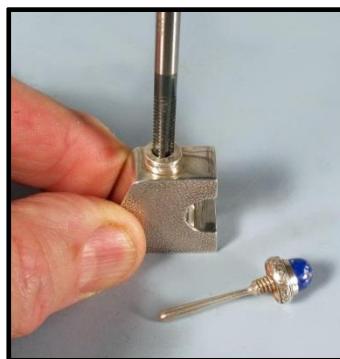
This page will be dedicated to bench tips and techniques from our readers. If you have bench tips you'd like to share, let us know! Bench tips can be anything - metal work, lapidary, wirework - anything creative that you would like to share. Send your tips to: aos.editor.02@gmail.com

THREADED FASTENERS

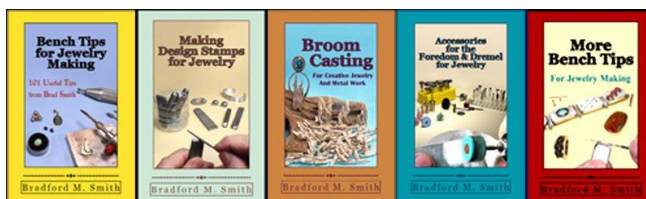
by Brad Smith

In some jewelry designs we need to join a couple elements together and cannot risk the heat of soldering. With other items, we may want to be able to disassemble the piece occasionally for cleaning or polishing. An easy solution for things like this is to use small bolts and nuts to hold components together.

Threaded fasteners come in all sizes from large ones on locomotives and earth moving machines to really small ones used in watches and cameras. A Google search will turn up specs and sources. Sizes are generally designated by a two digit code, the first denoting a diameter and the second describing the threads. Fasteners are made in a wide variety of materials (steel, brass, stainless, plastic, etc.) and come in both US and Metric sizes.



Work Smarter & Be More Productive with Brad's "How To" Jewelry Books on [Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith](https://www.amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith)



UPCOMING EVENTS

Reader: If your organization has an opal or rockhound-related event, please email particulars to info@opalsociety.org. Upcoming Event listings will be included at the discretion of The Opal Express editor as space and scheduling permit.

May 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

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: marylandoriele@gmail.com

May 11-12, 2024 – Jackson, CA 95642

Almador County Gem & Mineral Society

Kennedy Mine, Highway 49/88, Jackson, CA 95642

Hours: 10 AM – 4 PM Both Days

GEM AND CRAFTS FAIRE. Available will be rough/slabs of rock, lapidary items, arts & crafts vendors, handcrafted jewelry, beads and findings galore. Food and drink will be sold. Mine walking tours available. No dogs please.

Vendor information call (209) 296-4061 use this number to the public please.

Contact: (209) 304-9622

May 24-26, 2024 – Ventura, CA

Ventura Gem & Mineral Society and The American Federation of Mineralogical Societies

AFMS/CFMS GEM AND MINERAL SHOW AND CONVENTION

Ventura County Fairgrounds, 10 W. Harbor Blvd., Ventura, CA 93001

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

CFMS-AFMS National Show and Convention. 100 gem, mineral, fossil \$ lapidary arts exhibits; speakers & programs; on-going demos of lapidary arts, jewelry making and gold panning; raffle prizes & silent auctions; 50 dealers; children's activities & free resources for teachers. Proceeds support scholarships to college students in the earth sciences and/or jewelry arts & also support free educational outreach for schools, teachers, home-schoolers & youth groups.

This regional and national federation show is being run and sponsored by the Ventura Gem & Mineral Society

Contact: (805) 312-8467, info@vgms.org

Website: <http://www.2024cfms-afms.com>, <http://www.vgms.org>

June 15, 2024 – Bellflower, CA

Delvers Gem and Mineral Society

Holy Redeemer Lutheran Church, 14515 Blaine Ave.,

Bellflower, CA 90706

Hours: 10 AM – 4 PM

Rock & Lapidary Extravaganza. Parking lot sale – Tons of Fun. Free Admission, Free Parking. Gems, Minerals, Equipment, Odds and Ends.

June 8-9, 2024 – Escondido, CA

Palomar Gem and Mineral Club

California Center for the Arts – at the Conference Center, 340 North Escondido Blvd., Escondido, 92025

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

Our show is the largest indoor Gem and Mineral Show in Southern California. Held at the California Center for the Arts – at the Conference Center, 340 North Escondido Blvd., Escondido.

Admission: \$5.00, Children under 12 Free

Be entertained in 9000 square feet with 40 plus vendors displaying beautiful mineral specimens, faceting and lapidary rough fossils, and eye-catching handmade and vintage jewelry. This year we are expanding our vendors to independent artisans working in other materials. Our club experts will be demonstrating faceting, silversmithing, and cabbing. We have a close relationship with The Gem Institute of America and often have GIA students to ID gemstones of our guests.

Our visitors enjoy free parking, a well-lit, air-conditioned facility with clean restrooms. Old town Escondido restaurants are directly across the street. So, if you did not have time to go to Quartzite or Tucson, come and visit Escondido and shop locally at the show that is rapidly becoming the premier gems and mineral show in Southern California. Contact: (425) 281-6218, tonifloyd41615@gmail.com

Website: <http://palomargem.org>

June 29-30, 2024 – Culver City, CA

Culver City Rock & Mineral Club

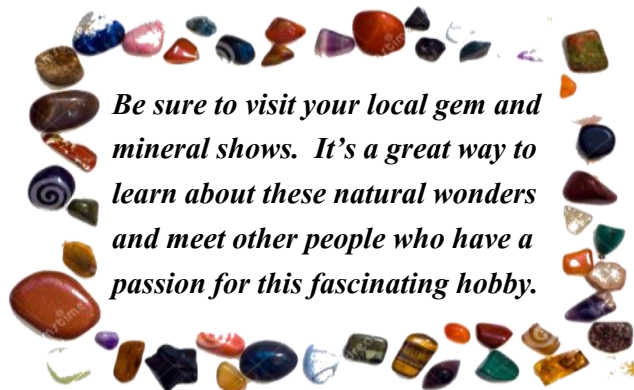
Veteran's Memorial Auditorium, 4117 Overland Ave., Culver City, CA 90230

Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 6 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 5 PM

2024 Fiesta of Gems – The Culver City Rock and Mineral Club will present its 61st Annual Fiesta of Gems Show on Saturday, June 29, 2024 from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. and Sunday, June 30, 2024 from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. at the Veterans Memorial Auditorium, 4117 Overland Ave., Culver City, CA 90230. This year the featured gemstone is Turquoise. Admission and parking are free.

The Fiesta of Gems is a free educational event for the community which provides fossils, gems and mineral exhibits, demonstrations, and children's programs. We also offer jewelry making demonstrations, gem, mineral dealers, tools, and books sales. This event helps several community programs in Culver City and helps to educate and inspire elementary students in Earth Science activities. For more information contact Janice Metz at culvercityrocks35@gmail.com

Website: <http://culvercityrocks.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: SELECT ONE	RENEWING MEMBERS	\$35.00	
	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

To pay via PayPal, please visit the [PayPal](#) page. The AOS PayPal account is membership@opalsociety.org. You may pay with a credit card or via your PayPal account. The transaction is completely secure and the AOS never sees your credit card number. If paying by PayPal, please [download](#), complete and send this application form by mail to the address above or email to AOS Treasurer aos.treasurer.02@opalsociety.org.

NAME			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
BUSINESS NAME			
ADDRESS		APT # or PO BOX	
CITY		STATE	
ZIP or POSTAL CODE	COUNTRY (IF OUTSIDE USA)		
PHONE - Home ()	PHONE - Business ()	FAX ()	
E-MAIL			
WEBSITE			
OCCUPATION	HOBBIES AND INTERESTS		

MEMBERSHIP ROSTER: The AOS publishes a membership directory once per year in its Newsletter, the *Opal Express*. Your name will be included. Please check what additional personal information that you want listed for other members. If it is different from the information above, please note that on the application.

☐ Address ☐ Phone ☐ E-mail ☐ Website

Please sign here: _____ Date _____

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Please address all inquiries and exchange newsletters to:

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Are Your Dues Due Now?

PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL or NEWSLETTER E-MAIL

There should 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 warning will be stated if you are overdue.

A Renewal Grace Period of two months will be provided. Please note, however, that as the system is now 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 05/04/24)

The Opal Express

American Opal Society
P.O. Box 4875
Garden Grove, CA 92842-4875

Volume 57, Issue 5

— 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, May 16th
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, May 16th 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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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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