

The Opal Express

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Opal
Society

September 2024

Volume 57 Issue 9



TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's Message	1
Members Only Password	1
Welcome	1
Needed Opal Express Editor and Facebook Admin	1
54 th Annual Opal Show	2
Save the Date!	3
Lightning Ridge Present & Future	4
Bench Tips	7
Upcoming Events	8

President's Message

Greetings Opalholics!

We are only a few weeks away from our annual Opal Show! I hope everyone will be able to attend. We are in need of volunteers for the show. If you would like to help take tickets and help with memberships or check on vendors needs during the show, please contact Show Chair, Veronica Purpura.

Kathleen James, the Editor of the Opal Express, has decided to resign after a five year run. She is also the Admin for our Facebook page and will be resigning from that position also. The society is currently searching for a new Editor and Facebook Admin starting in January 2025. Any takers out there?

Stan McCall
AOS President
Custom Creative Gem Cutting

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

**USER NAME: member
PASSWORD: DFRACT47&**



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

Helen Pembroke

Thank you Helen for joining the American Opal Society!



At the end of December, I will be retiring as Editor of The Opal Express and will also retire from being the Admin on the AOS Facebook page. I've enjoyed my time as Editor and Admin, but it's time to move on.

Therefore, AOS is looking for someone to take over these positions. The same person does not have to be Editor and Admin. The only requirement for Editor is that you are familiar with a document program (Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, etc.). As long as the final document can be saved as a PDF file, you can use whatever program works for you. Newsletter content is up to you.

If you are interested in either position, please let me or Stan McCall know.

Kathleen James
Editor

Join us for the 54th Annual Opal Show



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!

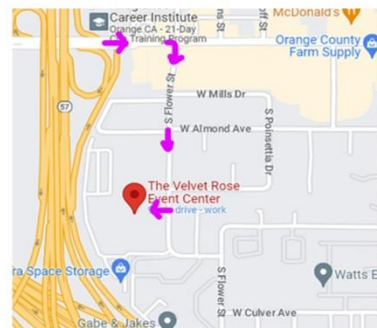
ADMISSION \$5.00 ADULTS

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)

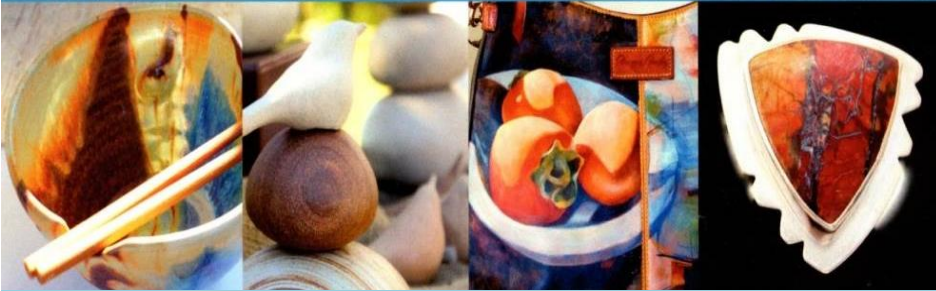
DIRECTIONS: exit Chapman from the 57 towards Orange. Take Flower Street and follow. Make a right into the venue just after passing Larkspur Drive. Parking lot is in the back. There is a church next door.



Save the Date!

For more than 50 years, the Artistic License Fair has been a special part of Orange County. Handmade, one-of-a-kind items crafted by 50+ artisans are featured in this best-selling show. The fair will be at the beautiful Muckenthaler Cultural Center, 1201 W. Malvern Avenue, Fullerton, California, October 5, 2024 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Hope to see you there!

ARTISTIC LICENSE FAIR - SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5TH - 10AM – 5PM



CELEBRATING THE SEASON OF AUTUMN AT THE MUCK!

Offering exquisitely crafted objects with living histories. Whether you're collecting for your home, your garden, or your wardrobe, the works of artisans will nourish your spirit. Surround yourself with handmade stories.



Muckenthaler Cultural Center
1201 W. Malvern Avenue
Fullerton, CA 92833

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2024

Lightning Ridge: Present & Future

by Stephen and Mary Aracic

Photos by Stephen Aracic

from

Metal Stone & Glass Magazine – Autumn 2004, Vol. 26

“Lightning Ridge Exposed”

as told to AOS editor, Kathleen James

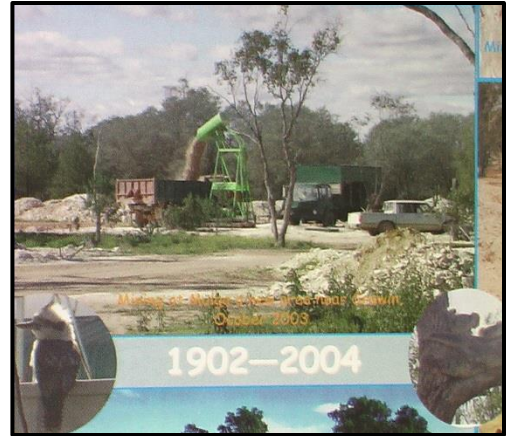
In 1995, Lightning Ridge was regarded as the Opal Capital of the World, taking away the title from Coober Pedy. Mintabe was a nose in front of Coober Pedy from 1985 to 1991, and then its opal production fell behind Coober Pedy's.

Sources from the Gem Industry Council and the Mines Departments of South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland show that approximately \$100 million worth of rough opal is produced annually, Australia-wide, about 94% of opal production. Despite the economy, war on terrorism and SARS in 2004, Lightning Ridge is still the Opal Capital of the World.

Lightning Ridge had an average production of \$48.5 million in opal between 1987 and 1993, peaking at \$62 million in 1990. South Australia produced 40% of the total value of the world markets. Coober Pedy 25%, Mintabe 12% and Andamooka 3%. Queensland produced 4%, whereas Lightning Ridge produced 50%.

The latest discovery in 2002 being Shields Mulga Rush and still expanding. It produced the finest seam gem opal; one of them weighing over a kilogram. Noodling on the designated dumps is often profitable for tourists. Now just how was our “Home of the Black Opal” discovered? Well it all depends on your source of information.

According to the Australian Museum Magazine, it was 1923. Black Opal of Lightning Ridge was discovered in about 1895 and has produced some of the finest opal ever found.



Mining at Mulga

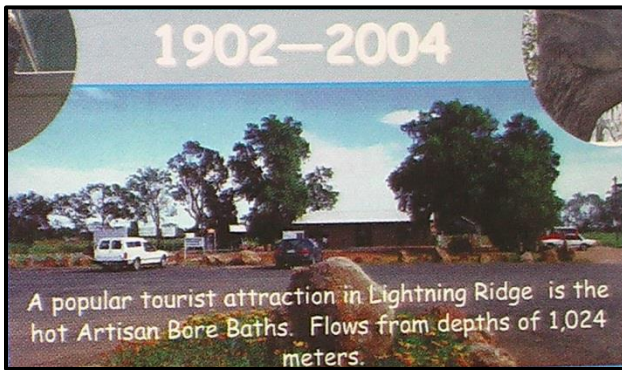
Prices fluctuated up and down until 1914. war injured the market to a great extent, but it did not take long until new markets opened up. There was a demand for low grade opal for the bottom trade. This class of opal was formerly cast aside as valueless.

In 1919, about 40 returned soldiers began mining. There were many advantages for them, especially those who were on a pension sufficient to keep them in provisions. Those in delicate health needed only to work on the surface. Very often, valuable gems were obtained from surface work. In 1920 other fields continued to yield gems of the finest quality for a ready market and eager buyers. Quite a number of men picked over the dumps on the surface searching for opals thrown out on the waste heaps at various times.

Continued on Page 5

In the last 30 years, the value of opal steadily increased and so did the population of Lightning Ridge. The business sector of that town improved and it has become a very attractive place to live and mine for opal. There is a lovely grocery store, a butcher shop, a number of cafes and quite a few opal shops. The Tourist Information Centre, on Bill O'Brian Way in town is next to Opal FM (Lightning Ridge Community Radio, Inc.) and directly opposite Lions Park is the Lightning Ridge Miner's Association Centre.

Then there are motels, a modern Bowling Club and caravan parks. There are some accommodations at local homesteads just a few kilometers out of town, in peaceful surroundings. There is a library and an Olympic size swimming pool. And further along Pandora Street is the ever-popular Artesian Bore Baths. People come from long distances to enjoy a dip in the warm mineral water. Test it first before you jump in!



There is a good preschool to year 12, a central school and TAFE Campus. Buses that once transported children to school in Walgett are now a thing of the past.

The Health Centre is excellent! And finally we have a brand new hospital since mid-2003. An Ochre Health Service providing a private doctor's surgery – including an ambulance service, emergency service and fire brigade, and a police station with a number of police on duty.

There's an airline service 3 days a week on a chartered plane. A bus service to Dubbo daily that joins the XPT train to Sydney in air conditioned comfort. There is also a bus service to Brisbane 2 days a week.

The town is serviced by TV channels and very good radio stations – 2WEB Bourke and more.

There are four service stations and garages for mechanical repairs. An industrial area providing many services of trade for miners. The population is about 6,000 during winter months, including miner's camping out on the fields. Many live in camps on the opal fields and there are a number of seasonal residents. Opal production declined in the last five years due to mining fields being exhausted and sale of opal dropped due to global crisis. However, tourism has picked up fantastically.

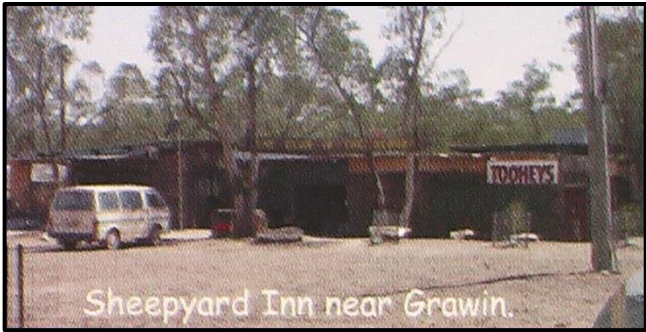
The surrounding lands are green with vegetation in the wet season with plenty of wildlife – kangaroos, koalas, emus, kookaburras and colourful birds, such as red-winged parrots. Noisy scrub birds, Brolgas, Port Lincoln Ringnecks. Red-capped robins and little lorikeets.

Pelicans nest from time-to-time in local dams. Water hens share the same dams. Pink and gray Galahs rend the air with their noisy chatter along with Major Mitchell cockatoos and lots of smaller birds.

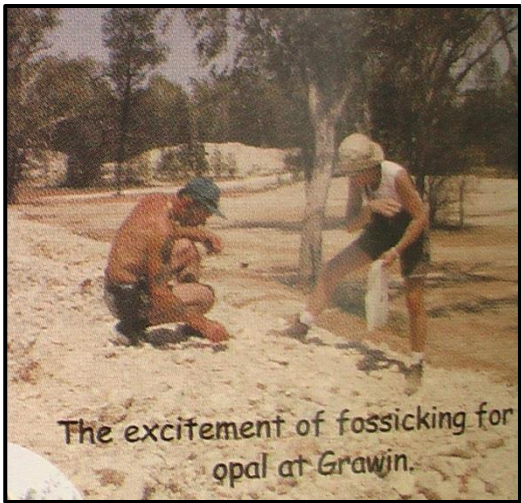
There are thousands of rabbits and hares, a few fox, feral cats and stray dogs. Some lizards, venomous snakes and spiders of many varieties. Some dangerous like Redback, Trapdoor, Funnel Web and the Mouse Spider. There are many varieties of butterflies, colourful flowers and native shrubs around the fields. Some native fruits, berries and bee hives nesting in Box Gum trees. Not forgetting a delicious, nutritious Pigweed that has a little flower! It grows wild – avoid sprays!

Guided tours are available on the fields and day trips around the Ridge. Also Cumborah, Garwin, Carter's Rush, Glengarry and Sheeppyard and an exciting trip to Mehi Opal Fields, New Angledool. Inquiries can be made at the Tourist Centre on the right side to town, opposite the Mining Centre and Roads & Transport.

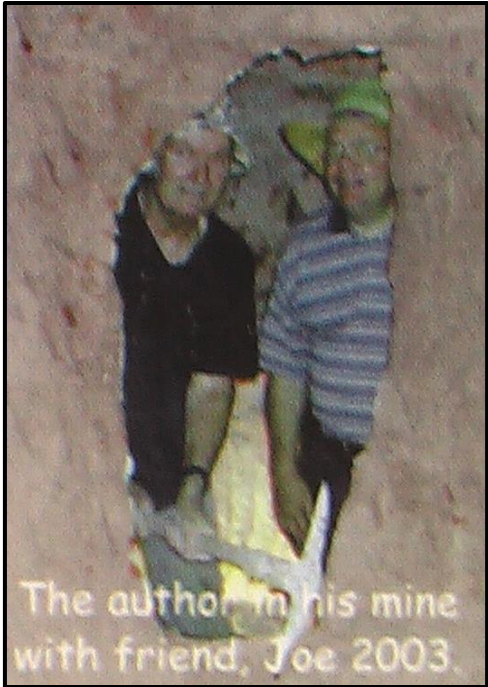
Easter is an exciting time around the opal fields. There's the Easter Horse Races, Friday Night Rodeo and Bull Ride. The Easter Egg Hunt, Miner's Challenge and Street Parade. Not forgetting the Opal & Gem Expo held in the Bowling Club each year in July.



Sheeppyard Inn near Grawin.

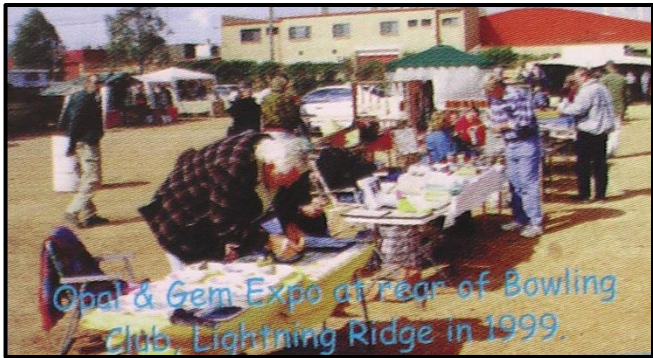


The excitement of fossicking for opal at Grawin.

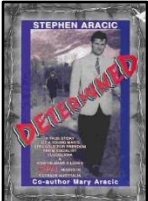
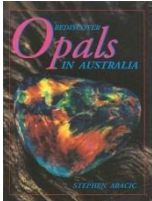
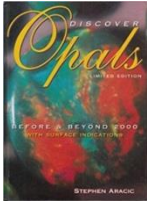


The author in his mine with friend, Joe 2003.

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!



Opal & Gem Expo at rear of Bowling Club, Lightning Ridge in 1999.



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

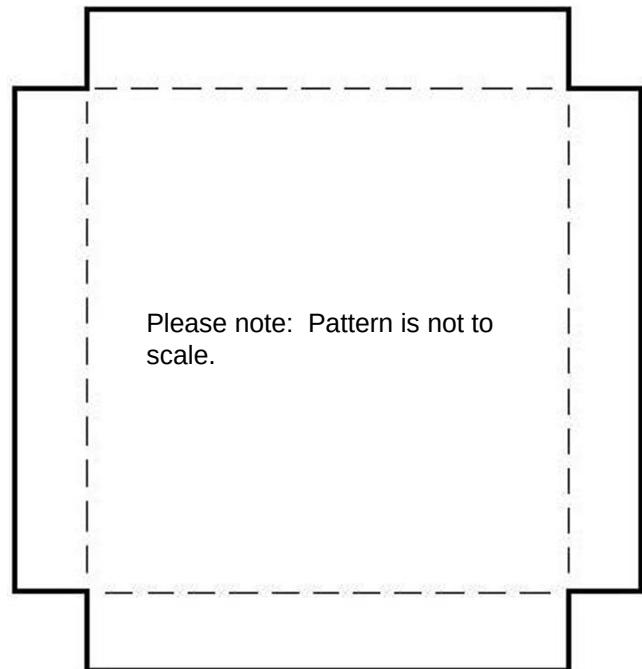
PUT A SPIN ON YOUR WORK

by Brad Smith

Often when we're soldering or annealing, we need to reach the piece from several angles. An easy way to deal with this is to mount the solder pad or the annealing pan on a turntable. And this saves a lot of time when you're soldering multiple pieces. Arrange 6-8 of them around the outside of the pad and rotate each piece into position for soldering.

All you need to make one of these is an inexpensive turn table assembly from a good hardware store or online from Amazon. Simply mount your annealing pan on the turntable or make a holder for your solder pad out of some thin aluminum sheet.

In building this turntable for my 6 inch square solder pad, I used a seven inch square piece of aluminum and cut out 1/2 inch notches from each corner. Then I used a vice to bend the sides along the dotted lines to form a tray that cradles the solder pad. A couple 1/4" long 6-32 machine screws and nuts attach the tray to the turntable.



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 21-22, 2024 – Monterey, CA

Carmel Valley Gem & Mineral Society
Monterey Fairgrounds, 2004 Fairgrounds Road, Monterey, CA 93950
Hours: 10 AM – 5 PM both days
Rocks, minerals, fossils, vendors, gems, silent auction, beads, equipment, exhibits, kind's stuff, and jewelry
Contact: susieharlow@gmail.com
Website: <http://cvgms.rocks>

September 28-29, 2024 – San Luis Obispo, CA

San Luis Obispo Gem and Mineral Club
Veteran's Memorial Building, 801 Grand Ave., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
Hours: 10 AM – 5 PM Daily
Gems By The Sea: Two dozen dealers, Unique handcrafted gifts by local artisans, Demonstrations of lapidary crafts, Children's activities. Free Parking. \$5 admission (12 & under free)
Website: <https://slogem.org/gems-by-the-sea/>

October 12-13, 2024 – Redwood City, CA

Peninsula Gem and Geology Society and Sequoia Gem and Mineral Society
Redwood City Community Activities Building, 1400 Roosevelt Ave., Redwood City, CA 94061
Hours: 10 AM – 5 PM daily
Rocks, Minerals, Fossils, Gems, Jewelry, Beads, Demonstrations, Kid's Activities
Contact: cci@pacbell.net
Website: <https://www.sequoiagemandmineralsociety.org/sqms-gem-mineral-show.html>

October 12-13, 2024 – Long Beach, CA

Long Beach Mineral and Gem Society
Signal Hill Library, 1800 E. Hill Street, Signal Hill, CA
Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM
2024 Gems on the Hill
Contact: (562) 253-1390, lbmineralgemsociety@gmail.com
Website: <http://www.facebook.com/LBMGS>

October 19, 2024 – West Hills, CA

Woodland Hills Rock Chippers
First United Methodist Church, 22700 Sherman Way, Woodland Hills, CA 91307
Hours: 10 AM – 5 PM
Contact: barnettcelia53@gmail.com
Website: <http://www.rockchippers.org>

October 19-20, 2024 – Santa Rosa, CA

Santa Rosa Mineral & Gem Society
1351 Maple Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95404
Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 6 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 5 PM
Earths Treasurers: Come enjoy the many and varied specimens slabs, rough rock, fine stones and jewelry the earth has created for us.
Contact: (707) 849-9551, coons@sonic.net
Website: <http://SRMGS.org>

October 26-27, 2024 – Sacramento, CA

Sacramento Mineral Society
Scottish Rite Center, 6151 H Street, Sacramento, CA 95819
Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM
88th Annual Sacramento Gem, Mineral, & Jewelry Show.
Free parking, \$8 adult admission, kids under 12 free with paid adult
Contact: (916) 662-5819, gemshow@sacramentomineralsociety.org
Website: <http://sacgemshow.com>

October 26-27, 2024 – Orange, CA

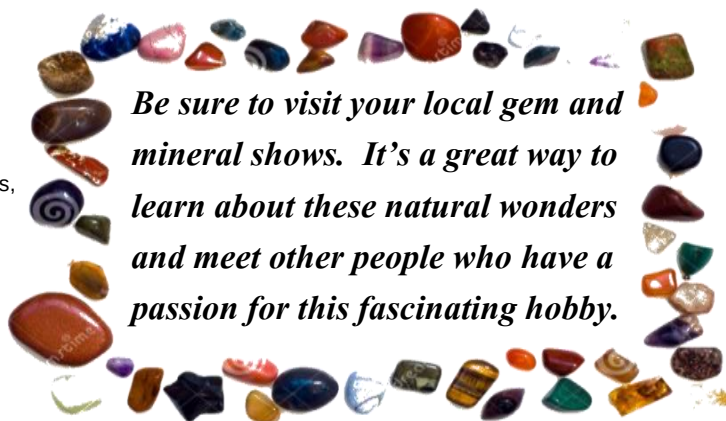
American Opal Society
Opal Gem & Jewelry Show
Velvet Rose Event Center, 300 S. Flower Street, Orange, CA 92868
Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 6 PM
Sunday 10 AM – 5 PM
54th Annual Opal, Gem & Jewelry Show
Rough & cut opals and gemstones, jewelry, supplies. Huge drawing. Free demonstrations.
Contact: (714) 501-9959, info@opalsociety.org
Website: <http://opalsociety.org>

November- 2-3, 2024 – Concord, CA

Contra Costa Mineral and Gem Society
Centre Concord, 5298 Clayton Road, Concord, CA 94521
Hours: Saturday 10PM – 5 AM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM
Join us for our Annual Mineral & Gem Show! 13 & Over \$10. 12 & Under FREE. Youth Org in Uniform FREE. Vendors, Holiday Shopping, Minerals, Gems, Fossils, Meteorites, Jewelry, Beads, Slabs, Displays, Fluorescent Tent, Demonstrations, Family Activities, Games, Rock Painting, Door Prizes, Silent Auction, Raffle, plus so much more...FREE SUNDAY ADMISSION WITH PAID SATURDAY!
And lots of FREE PARKING!
Contact: show@ccmgclub.com
Website: <http://www.ccmgclub.com/show>

November 2-3, 2024 – San Diego, CA

San Diego Mineral & Gem Society
Liberty Station Conference Center, 2600 Laning Road, San Diego, CA 92106
Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 6 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM
Admission & Parking: Free (Service Animals Only)
San Diego's finest gem and mineral show located in the beautiful Point Loma neighborhood of San Diego, 1/2 block north of N. Harbor Dr. and the San Diego Bay.. Featuring 20+ Dealers, Demonstrations and Exhibits with Minerals, Gem, Fossils, Crystals, Jewelry, Lapidary, Slabs, Rough, Rock & Gem I.D., Books, Door Prizes, Kids' Zone, and much more.
Contact: LuAnn Benton, benton.luannz@gmail.com
Driving Directions: <https://bit.ly/libcmap>
Website: <https://bit.ly/gemdiego2024>



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 (<u>Paper copy postal mailed instead of PDF file by e-mail</u>)		\$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](https://www.paypal.com) 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 related business.
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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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 06/23/24)

The Opal Express

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

Volume 57, 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 – Thursday, September 19th

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 19th 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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Kathleen James	Editor	(714) 828-1251
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Veronica Purpura	Show Chairman	(714) 501-9959
Jamie Cassidy-Curtis	Secretary	

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