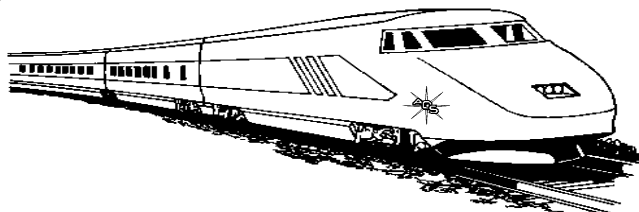


# The Opal Express

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## Members Only Website Password

Name: "member"; Password: "opalholic".

## President's Message

*By Pete Goetz*

Hey Folks, its 2016: Here somethings you should know:

2015 was a good year for the American Opal Society. Our annual Opal, Gem and Jewelry Show had a great attendance, more than I have seen in a long time. Interviews with both vendors and attendees all had a positive feeling about the Show. Kudos to Veronica!

I have received a goodly number of new member application from Russ Madsen. This indicates, to me, an increase in new members (at the time this article was written). However, this is dues paying season. So, I don't know how many of you are still excited about OPAL. I will get a net/gain membership accounting in the near future.

## THE FOLLOWING IS IMPORTANT!

**General Meetings will now be held on:**

**The Fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) Wednesday of the Month**

**The new location is:**

**Garden Grove Masonic Center  
11270 Acacia Parkway,  
Garden Grove, Calif., 92840**

**Board of Directors meetings will be held at the same place as above, but will be held on the Fourth (4th) Monday of the month.**

The next meeting will be Wednesday, January 27, 2016.

(Remember, any member may attend a BOD meeting. Now that we will have more room, you are all cordially invited.)

Our annual **Opal Gem & Jewelry Show** will have a new home this year. Our show will be held at the following location:

**Business Expo Center  
1960 S Anaheim Way  
Anaheim Calif. 92805**

See <http://www.busessexpocenter.com/>

More specifics to follow in near future.

## Mokume-gane



Example of Mokume-gane patterns in a sword

Hamano Masanobu - Tsuba with a Hawk and a Sparrow - Walters Art Museum 51381

**Mokume-gane** (木目金 *Mokumegane*?) is a Japanese metalworking procedure which produces a mixed-metal laminate with distinctive layered patterns. Mokume gane translates closely to "wood grain metal" or "wood eye metal", describing the way the metal takes on the appearance of natural wood grain.<sup>[1]</sup>

Mokume-gane has

been used to create many artistic objects. Though the technique was first created to decorate swords, the art survives today mostly in the form of jewelry and hollowware.

### History

First made in 17th-century Japan, mokume-gane was used only for swords. As the traditional samurai sword stopped serving as a weapon and became largely a status symbol, a demand arose for elaborate decorative handles and sheaths.<sup>1</sup>

To meet this demand, Denbei Shoami (1651–1728), a master metalworker from Akita prefecture, first came up with the process for creating mokume-gane. He initially called his product *guri bori* for its simplest form's resemblance to *guri*, a type of carved lacquerwork with alternating layers of red and black. Other historical names for it were kasumi-uchi (cloud metal), itame-gane (wood-grain metal), and yosefuki.<sup>1</sup>

The traditional components were relatively soft metallic elements and alloys (gold, copper, silver, shakudō, shibuichi, and kuromido) which would form liquid phase diffusion bonds with one another without completely melting. This was useful in the traditional techniques of fusing and soldering the layers together.<sup>[2]</sup>

Over time, the practice of making mokume-gane faded. The katana industry dried up in the late 1800s when the traditional caste system dissolved and people were no longer able to carry their swords in public. The few metalsmiths who practiced in mokume transferred their skills to create other objects.

By the twentieth century, mokume-gane was almost entirely unknown. Japan's movement away from traditional craftwork, paired with the great difficulty of mastering the mokume-gane art had brought mokume artisans to the brink of extinction. It reached a point where only scholars and collectors of metalwork were aware of the technique. It was not until the 1970s, when Eugene Michael Pijanowski and Hiroko Sato Pijanowski brought mokume works to the United States that the artform re-emerged in the public eye. Today, jewelry, flatware, hollowware, and other artistic objects are made using this technique.

Modern processes are highly controlled and include a compressive force on the billet. This has allowed the technique to include many nontraditional components such as titanium, platinum, iron, bronze, brass, nickel silver, and various colors of karat gold including yellow, white, sage, and rose hues as well as sterling silver.<sup>[3]</sup>

### Techniques

#### Fusing (traditional)

Metal sheets were stacked and carefully heated; the solid billet of simple stripes could be forged and carved to increase the pattern's complexity. Successful lamination using the traditional process requires a highly skilled smith with a great deal of experience. Bonding in the traditional process is achieved when some or all of the

alloys in the stack are heated to the point of becoming partially molten (above solidus) this liquid alloy is what fuses the layers together. Careful heat control and skillful forging are required for this process.

#### Soldering (Brazing)

The sheets were soldered using silver solder or some other brazing alloy. This technique joined the metals, but is

difficult to perfect, particularly on larger sheets. Flux inclusions could be trapped or bubbles could form. Commonly, imperfections need to be cut out, and the metal re-soldered.

#### Solid-state bonding (modern)

The modernized process typically uses a controlled atmosphere in a temperature-controlled furnace. Mechanical aids such as a hydraulic press or torque plates (bolted clamps) are also typically used to apply compressive force on the billet during lamination. These provide for the implementation of lower temperature solid-state diffusion between the interleaved layers, thus allowing the inclusion of non-traditional materials.

#### Development of the Mokume pattern

After the diffusion of layers, the surface of the billet is cut with chisel to expose lower layers, then flattened. This cutting and flattening process will be repeated over and over again to develop intricate patterns.

#### Coloring

To increase the contrast between the laminate layers many mokume-gane items are colored by the application of a patina (a controlled corrosion layer) to accentuate or even totally change the colors of the metal's surface.

#### Rokushō

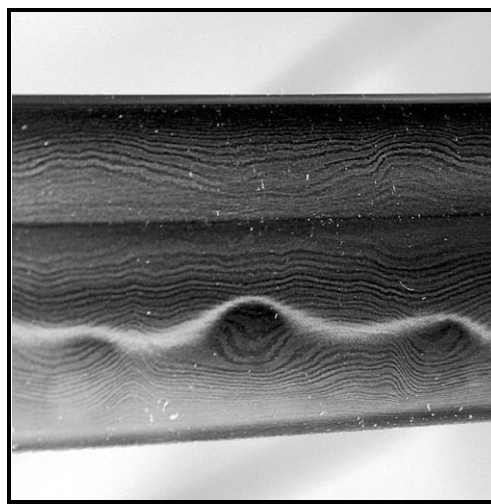
One example of a traditional Japanese patination for mokume-gane is the use of rokushō.

Rokushō is a complex copper verdigris compound produced specifically for use as a patina.

To color the shakudō and gold, submerge the piece in boiling rokushō, and hold there, agitating constantly, until it reaches the desired color. Rokushō colors shakudō a black-purple. The more gold is in the alloy, the more purple it turns.

Rokushō is produced in small batches in a traditional process and is somewhat difficult to acquire outside Japan. There are some proposed substitute formulas.

Traditionally a paste of ground daikon radish is also used to prepare the work for the patina. The paste is applied immediately before the piece is boiled in the rokushō to protect the surface against tarnish and uneven coloring. From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mokume-gane>



Detail of Mokume-gane patterns in a sword



Mokume-gane Ring



# The Smuggled Stone that Was Once More Precious Than Gold

By Alex Preston Mandalay, Myanmar; 14 July 2014



Myanmar, also known as Burma, is one of the world's largest Jade producers - but with trade bound by international sanctions, many of the precious gemstones are smuggled out of the country.

At first, I think it's a waterfall. A wave of liquid sound comes towards me over the brackish waters of the Irrawaddy River.

As I get closer, crossing a bridge beside a flock of orange-robed monks, the wash of noise becomes louder, more crystalline. I'm in Mandalay, northern Myanmar, a bustling city of a million people, and the sound is the clack and rattle of hundreds of thousands of precious stones in the world's largest jade market.

I approach the market's entrance past workshops where teenage boys, cigarettes drooping from their lips, carve raw lumps of jade on viciously spinning wheels.

The market itself is a vast and baffling warren, row after row of traders with their iridescent stones laid out on white trays.

At least half the traders are Chinese, and the voices that ring out over the clatter of sorting stones mix Mandarin and Burmese as they vie for business.



Estimates place the value of Myanmar's jade trade at more than \$8bn (£4.7bn) a year. Most of the jade goes to China, whose presence in Myanmar has been growing at a precipitous rate since the end of the military dictatorship in 2011.

As I walk along one of the market's narrow alleys, side-stepping a slushy pile of betel nut pith, I see a Chinese trader, a woman in an embroidered skirt and Elton John T-shirt, fix a loupe to her eye to inspect a small pile of luminous green stones.

She's haggling with a young man. We'll call him Breng Mai, a pseudonym for reasons which will become clear. He's from Kachin State, the semi-autonomous region in the far north of the country.

The story of Burmese jade is inextricably tied to the turbulent history of Kachin, a once-lush country of rolling hills and steep ravines that rubs borders with India's lawless Nagaland.

The Kachin Independence Army (KIA) fought a long and bloody war against the Burmese government, with an official ceasefire declared in 1994, but tensions and outbreaks of violence persist, with Myanmar's security services asserting a heavy presence in the area. While the roadblocks and curfews may help keep the uneasy peace, they also ensure the government maintains control over the jade business.

Later I meet Breng Mai in his aunt's grocery store in downtown Mandalay. He's 23, absurdly handsome with a vogueish blonde streak in his spiked hair. He's wearing a KIA T-shirt. The shop is bare and dingy, a single bulb hanging from the roof.

On the dusty counter are eggs, toothpaste, joss sticks and prawn crackers. Breng Mai leads me down a corridor, through a curtained doorway and into a back room, the centre of his smuggling empire.

It's like the planet Krypton, great mounds of jade dimly glowing.

"It is all chinjalu," he tells me, a Kachin word for jade of the highest clarity and quality - known elsewhere as "imperial jade". The shop is a front, run by his aunt as a warehouse for Breng Mai's illicit operations.

Sipping tea by the piles of precious stones, Breng Mai tells me he went into the jade mines aged 15.

"Although some working there were as young as eight," he says, "it was dangerous. There were regular avalanches. In one, our whole camp was swept away. I damaged my legs but my best friend was killed."

To trade legally, jade miners have to pay a tax to the government.

"Smuggling makes my profits much higher," Breng Mai says.

"I drive a beer truck from Hpakan to Mandalay every few weeks. The barrels in the middle of the van are full of jade. The government carries out raids every so often, but so far I've been lucky," he adds.



## Jade, the royal gem



- Jade is found in many colours including green, white, grey, black, yellow, orange and violet
- It has been known to Man for 7,000 years but in prehistoric times was used for tools and weapons because it is so tough

- Often called the royal gem in China where it was prized by emperors
  - Mayas and Aztecs in Central America valued it more highly than gold
  - Jade is a generic term for two different gems, nephrite and jadeite
- Source: [International Colored Gemstone Association](http://www.internationalcoloredgemstoneassociation.com)

While the West has largely lifted sanctions against Myanmar in the wake of the tentative steps towards democracy taken by the government of Thein Sein, a ban on jade trading still exists.

Conditions in the mines are abysmal, with the US government stating the jade business "contributes to human rights abuses and undermines Burma's democratic reform process".

While foreigners are not officially allowed to mine jade, Breng Mai tells me most of the major operations are now run by the Chinese.

"The Chinese pay the miners a lot more, but the conditions there are even worse," he says.

Kachin's formerly verdant hills are now scarred and treeless.

"When the Chinese are finished with Kachin State, there will be no jade left. Already mines that were rich 10 years ago are running out," he says.

Until that day, the stalls of Mandalay's labyrinthine jade market will continue to chime with the clatter of precious stones, the call of Chinese and Burmese voices.

As I leave, Breng Mai hands me a small sliver of dark jade. "For luck," he says, "it has worked for me."

From <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-28208145>

+++++The following are the final chapters of the book *From Rags to Riches*, by Peter Greisl. The first forty chapters were published in the *Opal Express* from May 2011 through Nov. 2013. The Editor

## From Rags to Riches

### Chapter 52 – "The Promise"

Having arrived at home everyone was waiting outside, it like a reception committee.

What's up I asked getting out of the car, Chris and Beatrix came over to me and hugged and kissed me. Johnny was smiling like a Cheshire cat, I asked him what is this grin all about, he just shook his head and said nothing special, I just had a great day, what sleeping all day I smiled. 'No' he replied I have been busy. I looked at Chris she just winked at me and said you will be pleased.

Ok what's going on' I said. Johnny said come on follow me. We went in to the Cutting shed and there were three large Cucumber Jars full with potch and colour, plus there were 4 of our Epsom Jars full with solids, doublets and triplets, plus another couple coffee jars full of chips. Hey mate, I am impressed I commented. Johnny replied I thought you would be, everything is now tumbled, and cleaned. We have 65 ounces salable potch and colour, 9 ounces of solids, 5.5ounces of doublet and triplet material, a couple painted ladies and a piece of matrix., Hey Johnny that's great stuff, well done, I can see about 3 grand's worth of stuff here what do you think,' I asked him. He replied 'I think you could be close. Well let's take it down to Peter and see what he has to offer.

We packed the bottles and stuff in a bag and told Chris what we are up to and off we went.

I asked Johnny how he feels with his hangover etc., I told him of my event at the claim and what we up to with it. He was pleased with what I am told him and he assured me he will not have another midweek session. I said to him, I understand and of course in your case if there is a bit of crumpet available and on offer, I would be worried if you would make a detour, I am only concerned about the safety aspect, particular if no one would work with you, Just don't get drunk during the week after 12:00 on Saturday I could not care less it's your head. We arrived a Peters place and he was just finishing his supper, I asked if he wants us to come back tomorrow, he said' No come in

*The Opal Express*

*The American Opal Society*

while we still have sunlight,' We went inside and pulled out all our jars, and I said to him Peter 'As you know we been dealing with you for some time and we always came to you, this lot has to be all or nothing, including the potch and colour in those two large Cucumber Jars.

He looked at them first and said 'well let's have a look, have you got a price for the lot. I told him the ounces etc. and said to him I like \$ 5,000 for the lot, he smiled at me and said 'you are a bit ambiguous don't you think, I just replied 'Peter you have a look at the solids, and the doublets, and the chips, before you make up your mind.

Of course the same old scenario, out of the bottles in to his dish with water, swirling around pulling out piece by piece, and in the process, he said,' I have to admit this is great stuff, looking at the stuff it reminds me so much of the opal Drago pulled out from Tea Tree Hill, I said to Peter, that's right we working the left over's. Anyhow Peter continued with his ritual, writing his hieroglyphics down and weighed everything small and precious. He lifted the large Jars and guessed the weight, I nodded in agreement.

After the big silence, while he worked out the prices he finally said, 'Peter you are a long way behind the eight ball with your \$5,000.00' I replied Ok, how many pockets am I behind, a pool table has only 6 pockets.

He said 'I can't see more than \$ 3,500.00 here,' Peter I am disappointed' I said, I thought by supporting you and bringing all the best stuff to you, and we have not sold a single stone to anyone else, you would look after us.

Maybe that's the mistake I am making, I know most miners they run around and play one against another, I am not this kind of person, and I like to give my business to one dealer if he looks after me in good times and in bad times. So what I am saying is that Peter, I will accept \$ 4,000.00 and not a penny less, if you are prepared to pay that then I will continue to bring all my stuff to you, If you decline I will take this stuff away and play the field, because I am sure I will get this amount, I know you did not allow anything for the potch and colour the matrix and the painted ladies, When you look at it you can see it is a salable product and it is not a freebie, or thrown in with the deal.

'Well that was quite a speech you just gave me,' he commented. I replied with a smile but a firm 'Peter what's it going to be.' He looked at the parcel again, scribbled things on his pad, but he has not put a single stone back into any of my Jars, which is an indication he wants the stuff.

He looked and shoved things around and finally he said,' I pay you the \$ 4,000.00 but next time you make sure there is no potch and colour involved.

I said to him,' it's a deal Peter you just assured yourself a Loyal Client, and you will not get any more potch and colour.' We shook hands and he got the money from his safe and handed it to me. He said 'How about a beer' he offered which we accepted and we just talked about the claim and some of the big parcels which came out of Tee Tree Hill, we talked about open cut and dozers, after about 30 minutes in building a good rapport with Peter Vlack we left.

Johnny said where did you get the idea from about this money,' I replied, just think back every time we sold something we never had to fight for what we asked, that to me is an indication that we are too cheap with our parcels.' 'Would you have walked out with the stuff if he did not agree to pay the price?' Johnny asked. 'Yes I would but I would have kept it till we found some more and put it together and sell it then, I replied.

We drove back to our place and, Chris had the dinner on the go. I told her what happened and she was very happy about it, I gave Johnny his share which he thanked me for it. I told Chris that I can now order the material to build the toilet. This day was not too bad after all. We had a nice meal, chatted for a while and went to bed.

The next morning, Johnny has left already and I having my breakfast quickly and went to the shop to get it opened.

As soon as Hilda arrived I left for the claim. When I got there Johnny was just filling up all the equipment with gasoline. Got all the gear out of the Ute and was about to descend to the bottom of the shaft. I stopped him and said to him 'It is too crowded for two people down



there so what I suggest is we open up the bottom of the shaft right around by a couple of feet so we can stand upright and we can get enough buckets there when you work alone and you have to gouge and pull dirt, it would drive you nuts to go up and down with one bucket all the time.' He agreed and said 'since you know what you want why don't you take the first turn in gouging and I pull dirt.' Yeah that's ok with me, it is already quite warm, and I took off my shirt and was just in my work shorts and boots.

I went down and found all the gear like Jackhammers and hoses etc. I connected the jack hammer and pulled on the winch cable to let Johnny know to open the air valve on the compressor. As soon as the hoses became rigid from the air pressure and hissed gently from the relief valve of the Jack hammer I started gouging right around the shaft, once I had enough dirt I filled up the bucket and we started hoisting up. I don't know for how long I was gouging and filling buckets but I made very good progress virtually no rocks or boulders just nice clay and sand stone, I took out about 2 feet in depth out of the shaft walls right around, and I could see already the difference it will make, Just a little extra work in preparation and you will get the benefit later on.

Now it is getting easier as I can drop the dirt now and that really got me going, Sweat was pouring down my shorts, and forgot to bring down with me the water bag, so I stopped briefly yanked the winch cable and Johnny's appeared and I made the gesture of drinking, he understood and got the water bag and let it down to me. I had a good swig and continued, I was determined to dig all that out by myself as I know exactly what I want.

Any of and on flickering of the light I ignored as I knew it was Johnny to relief me. By doing all this work I gave myself a good opening on each of the existing drives. I must also watch, the higher I come with the gouging the closer I am getting to Opal level and you never know what could happen here in uncharted waters so to speak. We started winching again and I was very pleased with my effort, as I have achieved exactly what I want like a bell shape opening which will be now seven feet in diameter, the roof is giving me the confidence of the strong gypsum band, hence I was not too much concerned about any cave ins etc. This shaft will be the same like the one which has the main pillar in it on which we started to work originally and I still belief that is where my fortune lies.

Once I cleaned out all the dirt there is now enough room for both of us to work on any of the drives, I got all the dirt gouged out what I wanted and the opal level is now at eye level. I just got a couple more feet to take out under the opal level. I removed my jack hammer chisel it was all covered in white dust, looks like Gypsum but it was not. For a moment I started panicking I jerked the winch cable and Johnny showed his face, I ran my hand across my throat to indicate to cut the machinery, which he did I shouted up to him to bring the small Picks and Screw river and the drop sheet and bag.

He smiled at me and said questionable 'Yes?' I said I don't know, get your body down here and let's find out.

Johnny came down and said, 'Shit I would not belief this is the same shaft a few hours ago, bloody good job mate.' I acknowledged his praise and I showed him the dust covered chisel from the jack hammer, he smelled it and said it is not gypsum, I hope it is not what it possible could be, but we did not see a speck of colour.

I said to him check it out and find out what I have killed if anything. Johnny picked away gently with the pick and just as he got to the depth of the chisel he hit something and it sounded like breaking or cracking Glass.

I brought the light closer to where he is picking away and I was watching like a hawk to see if there is any colour anywhere.

He finally refrained to the Screwdriver and lifted out small pebbles, he did not get anywhere so he took the pick again and picked away and then when he removed the pick, suddenly a large lump of level dropped and behind there in the wall was a really large pocket and it was full with potch, Johnny dug it out with the screwdriver, lumps the size of matchboxes and larger, I never saw so much potch in one place. I was perspiring mainly in anticipation of what will he uncover

next. Johnny handed me all the pieces he dug out and I eagerly looking at each piece at close proximity to the light to see if I can detect this magic rainbow in this jelly like substance, I could actually see through most of the larger pieces if there were some colour there it would be nice jelly, but unfortunately Mother nature was not that generous. Johnny also unearthed a nice piece of rock which had a milky seam running across, it was oval shaped and about eight inches long and 4 inches wide and about 3 inches thick, and the seam was running the long way right through the middle of the rock.

I said to Johnny, 'I am going to break that rock open,' he nodded and I held it in one hand and smashed the broad side of the pick where the handle goes through on the rock.

It split open like a coconut right on the seam it displayed on both sides milky white potch when I put the rock closer to the light I noticed a faint harlequin pattern, the cover was not very thick maybe 2 or 3 mm thick.

Johnny in the meantime continued to extract potch which seems to be getting smaller and lesser, but what happened he picked up very thin traces of colour.

This is getting quite exciting; we finally in an area with traces and quite some untouched ground to cover. It just shows you it does not mean because some previous miners left the claim after their find or disappointment. We are in Opal country and you never know where this beautiful Gem is hiding. We got at least here a couple month of work if we follow the drives and make cross drives etc., safety aspect permitting.

Johnny finished with his scratching around, and suggested we call it a day and go home and work out a plan of attack.

I acknowledged and said just let me take down the floor in here in the main shaft so we don't have to push buckets uphill from the drives, once I finished which should not take too long 'I let you pack up and shut down I want to go in to town and pick up my meat and a couple bottles of wine.' 'Ok Boss I see you at home he replied.' I started hammering away and loosened about two feet all round, we pulled this dirt and I just chipped away gently to level the floor of once I have finished, I signaled Johnny and he did his final task, I climbed up and got in the VW and drove to town to do what I had in mind.

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## Famous Opal Lovers

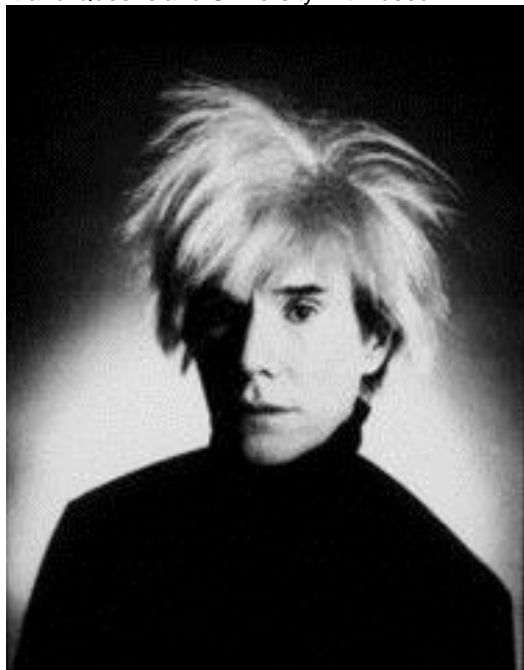
### Elizabeth Taylor

Elizabeth Taylor is well known for her love of fine jewellery and also her love of Australian Opals, She had several items of opal jewellery in her collection and also purchased opals for her mother whom had a great love for this stunning and unique stone.



## Andy Warhol

Andy Warhol, one of the most recognized artists of the modern world fell hard and fast into his love affair with this magnificent gemstone, very soon after his first exposure to opals he became an avid collector and in 1977 his exhibition *Opal the Rainbow Gem* at the ICA in London featured photos of the gemstone taken through a microscope. Hope is well represented in public and private collections, including the National Gallery of Australia, National Gallery of Victoria, Art Gallery of South Australia, Queensland Art Gallery, Heide Museum of Modern Art and Queensland University Art Museum.



## Sam Worthington & Natalie Mark

When the star of *Avatar*, Sam Worthington arrived on the red carpet with his date Natalie Mark sporting a pair of Bunda Opal earrings to the 2010 Oscars, the gemstone was declared in vogue. The amazing 'Varvara' earrings are huge Boulder Opal splits, making a bold statement on the red carpet at the 82nd Academy Awards.



## Marc Antony & Cleopatra

Nonius (a Senator of the Roman Republic), owned a fabulous Opal known throughout the civilised world. The opal was set in a ring, it is said to have been the size and shape of a hazelnut.

Roman General Mark Antony was so entranced by the moving lights within Nonius' stone his fascination led him to covet the stone which he sought as a gift for his lover Queen Cleopatra VII of Egypt (30-69BC).

Antony offered Nonius several times the 2,000,000 Sesterces at which the Opal ring had been appraised, perhaps even the price of a villa on one of the Seven Hills of Rome in 35BC. Nonius refused to sell it, declaring it was his life. Mark Antony made him an offer he could not refuse and proscribed the Senator. Nonius preferred to be banished from Rome losing all he owned, leaving behind his wife and family, though fleeing with his most highly prized possession.

In 42 BC Marc Antony summoned Cleopatra to a meeting in Tarsus (present-day Turkey), so she could explain why Egypt had not supported him in the Roman civil war against Caesar.

Now that her lover Julius Caesar was dead, Cleopatra needed Mark Antony's approval and she set about getting it the way she knew best: with a meticulously planned seduction. She sailed to meet him up the Cydnus River in a scented, candlelit golden barge, where she invited him to dinner.

He found the preparations made to receive him magnificent beyond words, "but what astonished him most was the extraordinary number of lights... they were arranged and grouped in such ingenious patterns in relation to each other, that they created the most brilliant spectacle imaginable to delight the eye.

An eleven year love affair ensued, which became all-consuming and fired the lovers with the ambition to create a new world order. They were the ancient world's most famous celebrity couple.

Therein lies the reason Antony wanted the Senator's Opal more than any of the innumerable treasures in Rome - it reminded him of the atmosphere in which his mind and body were fatefully seduced – the fiery Opal made light dance in mesmerizing patterns around its emboldened beholder.

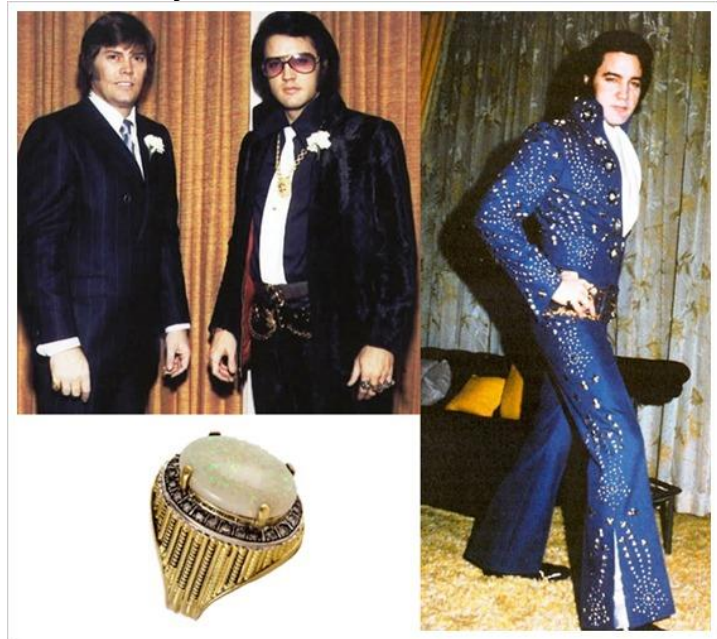
## Sarah Bernhardt

Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923) was the most famous actress of her time, she scandalized Paris by wearing pants and taking men's roles in several of her plays. In the US she was coveted by the press and received in every city as an ambassador of style. Sarah frequently wore Opal which was her birthstone and highly regarded within her circle. The distinguished stage actress, who later pioneered the movie-making era, was a great patroness and inspiration to her fellow artists, Henri Vever, Rene Lalique and the decorative painter Alphonse Mucha. Sarah commissioned this ruby-eyed snake bracelet and ring (hathphul), inlaid with Opals, for her 1890 premiere as Cleopatra. Mucha provided the sketches of this extraordinary jewel executed by George Fouquet. Bernhardt has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1751 Vine St.





## Elvis Presley



This massive 14k vintage opal ring featuring a huge crystal opal surrounded by 1.25ct of VS diamonds, was Purchased by Elvis Presley at Thunderbird Jewelers Las Vegas in the early 1970's and worn both on and off stage. With a color photograph of Elvis wearing the ring on his pinkie finger on stage at the Las Vegas Hilton in July of 1974, wearing a straw hat with a banner reading "Elvis for President." This stunning stone (opal) captured the heart of the king of rock and roll!!!

## Jenna Dewan-Tatum

Jenna Dewan-Tatum, the new wife of Channing Tatum, wore amazing Queensland Boulder Opal and diamond earrings from Irene Neuirth with her teal dress. It's great to see the new generation of celebrities continuing to wear this unique jewellery.



## Queen Elizabeth II

In 1954, a search for the finest opal ever found at the South Australian opal fields was announced by the South Australian Government. The opal would be presented to Queen Elizabeth II on the occasion of her first visit to Australia. Altmann & Cherny submitted an outstanding

piece of rough opal which had been mined at Andamooka. The Government selected this opal as the most appropriate and befitting gemstone for this occasion.

The opal was then cut and polished by John Altmann. Once cut it weighed 203 carats and displayed a magnificent array of colours including red, blue and green. It was set with diamonds into an 18 carat palladium necklet.



## Gene Simmons (Nick Simmons)

This stunning custom piece was commissioned by Gene Simmons for Nick Simmons his son to wear in their documentary Simmons Family Jewels.

It's great to see some huge stars showing love for opal and not only purchasing a piece but having it designed especially for them.



## Victoir de Castellane

(creative director of Dior Fine Jewellery)

"I am crazy about Australian Opals. They look artificial but are completely natural. You get every colour in one stone; that's economic, non? And the colours are so fluorescent; they're very strange, almost like a rainbow."

When told that Australians are generally prone to cringing at opals she is shocked. "If they don't want them, please give them to me. I'll do an exchange. I'll have a big chunk of it." - Harpers Bazaar interview by Jamie Huckbody.



## John Davison Rockefeller

John Davison Rockefeller America's first billionaire and the world's richest man. Rockefeller was taken by the alluring charms of Opal gemstones and had to have the mesmerizing 'Fire Queen' Opal for which he paid £75,000, a record for an Opal. Rockefeller achieved his dreams and gained a huge multinational empire as he was a great industrialist who founded Standard Oil and revolutionized the petroleum industry, is often regarded as the richest person in history and as having defined the structure of modern philanthropy. His collection of rare and famous Opal gemstones and jewellery were viewed personally by Rockefeller regularly as the opals gave him inspiration.

From <http://www.sunriseopals.com/pages/famous-opal-lovers>

## January 2016 Gem & Mineral Shows

more shows can be found at <http://www.rockngem.com/show-dates-display/?ShowState=ALL>

8-10—SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA: Wholesale and retail show; Gem Faire Inc, Sonoma County Fairgrounds; 1350 Bennett Valley Rd; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 Admission, Children Free; Fine jewelry, precious & semi-precious gemstones, millions of beads, crystals, gold & silver, minerals & much more at manufacturer's prices. Exhibitors from around the world will be on site. Jewelry repair & cleaning while you shop. Free hourly door prizes.; contact Yooy Nelson, 503-252-8300; e-mail: [info@gemfaire.com](mailto:info@gemfaire.com); Web site: <http://www.gemfaire.com>

915-17—GLOBE, ARIZONA: Annual show; Gila County Gem & Mineral Society, Gila County Fairgrounds; 900 E. Fairgrounds Rd.; Fri. 9 -5, Sat. 9 -5, Sun. 9 -4; Single Admission \$3, Couple Admission \$5, Free Admission for students/children; contact Jodi Brewster, P.O. Box 487, Miami, AZ 85539, (623)-810-9780; e-mail: [jodibrewster66@gmail.com](mailto:jodibrewster66@gmail.com); Web site: <http://www.gilagem.com>

15-17—DEL MAR, CALIFORNIA: Wholesale and retail show; Gem Faire Inc, Del Mar Fairgrounds; 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 Admission, Children Free; Fine jewelry, precious & semi-precious gemstones, millions of beads, crystals, gold & silver, minerals & much more at manufacturer's prices. Exhibitors from around the world will be on site. Jewelry repair & cleaning while you shop. Free hourly door prizes. ; contact Yooy Nelson, 503-252-8300; e-mail: [info@gemfaire.com](mailto:info@gemfaire.com); Web site: <http://www.gemfaire.com>

15-17—HONOLULU, HAWAII: Annual show; Hawaii Rock and Mineral Society, Honolulu Museum of Art School; Linekona Art Center Building, 1111 Victoria Street; Fri. 5:30 -9, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; Free Admission ; Gem and mineral displays, interactive with minerals and fossils of Hawaii. Lapidary cutting and polishing demonstrations. Gem Identification by local experts. Fluorescent Minerals Displays in a dark room. Rare display of Hawaiian Minerals: Quartz, Calcite, Opal, and Agate. ; contact Markus Faigle, PO Box 23020, Honolulu, HI 96823; e-mail: [hui.pohaku@gmail.com](mailto:hui.pohaku@gmail.com); Web site: [http://pohakugalore.net/Hui\\_pohaku/Winter-2016-Hawaii-Mineral-Show.html](http://pohakugalore.net/Hui_pohaku/Winter-2016-Hawaii-Mineral-Show.html)

16-17—EXETER, CALIFORNIA: Annual show; Tule Gem and Mineral Society, Exeter Veterans Memorial Building; 324 N. Kaweah Ave.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; Free Admission; Demonstrations, Door Prizes, Free Parking, Gems, Grab Bags, Snack Bar, Jewelry, Lapidary Supplies, Minerals, Outstanding Displays, Raffle, Rocks, Silent Auction, Ten Dealers, and Wheel of Fortune.; contact Margaret Buchmann, 5215 W. Nicholas Ave, Visalia, CA 93291; e-mail: [margaretbu03@gmail.com](mailto:margaretbu03@gmail.com); Web site: [www.tulegem.com](http://www.tulegem.com)

22-24—SAN RAFAEL, CALIFORNIA: Annual show; Gem Faire Inc, Marin Center; 10 Avenue of the Flags; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; Free Admission; Fine jewelry, precious & semi-precious gemstones, millions of beads, crystals, gold & silver, minerals & much more at manufacturer's prices. Exhibitors from around the world will be on site. Jewelry repair & cleaning while you shop. Free hourly door prizes. ; contact Yooy Nelson, 503-252-8300; e-mail: [info@gemfaire.com](mailto:info@gemfaire.com); Web site: <http://www.gemfaire.com>



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# American Opal Society Membership Application

FILL IN APPLICABLE INFORMATION		DUES / FEES)	AMOUNT PAID
DUES: SELECT ONE	RENEWING MEMBERS	\$30	
	NEW MEMBERS	\$40	
INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP FEE (All addresses <u>outside</u> of USA)		\$10	
PRINTED NEWSLETTER FEE (Paper copy postal mailed instead of PDF file by e-mail)		\$5	
ADDITIONAL BADGES (Your First Badge is <u>free</u> when joining)		\$10	
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, just visit the membership page on our website at [http://opalsociety.org/aos\\_application\\_by\\_web.htm](http://opalsociety.org/aos_application_by_web.htm) and complete the form. 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		
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CITY		STATE
ZIP or POSTAL CODE		COUNTRY (IF OUTSIDE USA)
PHONE - Home ( )	PHONE - Business ( )	FAX ( )
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 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

# The Opal Express

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

Volume #49 Issue #1

January 2016

## Jan. 27<sup>th</sup> General Meeting

— GENERAL MEETINGS —  
4th Wednesday of the Month  
7:00 pm - 9:30 PM

### Garden Grove Masonic Lodge

11270 Acacia Pkwy  
Garden Grove, CA 92840

### MEETING ACTIVITIES

Opal Cutting, Advice, Guest Speakers,  
Slide Shows, Videos, Other Activities

TO:

**Speaker this Month:**  
**Stan McCall**  
**on**  
**Quartzsite, Arizona**



### Some Topics In This Issue:

- New Location for AOS Meetings
- Stone More Precious Than Gold
- From Rags to Riches: Ch 52 "The Promise"
- Famous Opal Lovers

## The American Opal Society

<http://OpalSociety.org>

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