The Opal Express American Opal Society

P.O. Box 4875 Garden Grove, CA 92842-4875









Volume #32 Issue #12 December 2000

CHRISTMAS POTLUCK Thursday December 14 7PM

TO:

Corey L. Kuepper Me1/1/01 6702 Rostrata Ave. Buena Park, CA 90621

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GENERAL MEETINGS 2nd Thursday 7:00-9:00 PM Garden Grove Civic Women's Club 9501 Chapman Ave. (NE corner of Gilbert & Chapman) Garden Grove, CA

MEETING ACTIVITIES Opal Cutting Advice Guest Speakers Slide Shows Videos Other Activities

Meeting Location

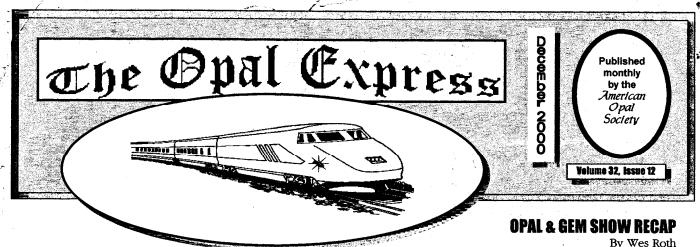
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Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays One and All!

American Opal Society Officers

(818) 951-1402 Carol Bova President email bova@bovagems.com Mike Kowalsky Vice Pres. (714) 761-4876 email mykowalsky@aol.com Alien Farquer Treasurer (714) 537-0556 email nnf@earthlink.net Jim Pisani Secretary (562) 797-4340 email vulajim@gte.net Russ Madsen Editor email 76550.1366@compuserve.com (562) 425-9788 American Opal Society medicae http://www.opalsociety.org



My thanks to Mike Kowalsky and his crew for NO POWER LOSSES!

 Much gratitude to Clare Gagnon and all of the crew of demonstrators. They were well appreciated and well enjoyed by the show guests this year.

 Thanks to all of our volunteers! We were a little short handed but those who helped did an excellent job, they searched for both Carol and myself and asked for things to do.

◆ Thanks to Carol and Wes for feeding the dealers, demonstrators and volunteers and to Pam Strong for taking the unwanted job of delivery person. They all appreciated it and said so to me.

♦ Please see page 5 for more show details. ♣

President's Message from Carol Boya

I have a very brief, but heartfelt message this month: THANK YOU! To everyone who helped plan the annual American Opal Society Show, made arrangements with vendors, helped with mailings, distributed flyers, did publicity work, got permits, donated all those wonderful door prizes, picked up and gave out door prizes, hauled and moved everything we needed in and out, set up the electrical lines and arranged the tables, created and placed signs, shopped for supplies, made security and hotel arrangements and negotiated contracts, worked the registration desk, arranged the speakers, demonstrated techniques, set up displays, and to everyone who came, and looked and learned and enjoyed.... Thank you!!

Volunteer Thank You!

We would like to specially thank the following volunteers who worked on producing the 2000 Opal Show:

Wes Roth – Show Chair Mike Kowalsky Jay Carey Bob Dixon Stan McCall Corey Kuepper Bob Olinskas Jim Pisani Frann Roth

Fay McDowell (continued on page 3)

DATES TO REMEMBER

Christmas Party Potluck Dinner Thurs. Dec 14.7PM

Board of Directors Meeting

Mon. Dec 11 7PM

Editorial disclaimer:
"If it ain't in here, it's news to mel" Gall with your newsletter news today, - WA THE OPAL FLASH 10/00

WORK SHOP INFORMATION...

The LOCATION for the Opal Society workshop is the lapidary classroom at Walker Jr High School, 8132 Walker St., La Palma, CA 90623

<u>Directions:</u> (Choice of 3 Freeway approaches)

[1] Exit the 605 at Carson St and proceed east, or [2] exit the 5 or 91 Fwy at Valley View and proceed south, or

[3] exit the 22/405 Freeways at Valley View and proceed north.

Walker Jr HS is on Walker St north of Lincoln Ave. It is on the east side of Walker between Crescent Ave. and La Palma Ave. Drive to the far back of the school to the Lapidary Arts classroom.

Only AOS members may use the equipment and workshop. You will be required to sign a release form as well.

Workshop Schedule on Page 5 shows dates/ times and appointment instructions.

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President's Message (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)
Louise Oleson
Hisako Schlatter
Pam Strong
Murray Schiff

(If we've missed someone, please don't be angry... just let someone know so we can acknowledge you in January! It was a busy time, and in the haste to get as much as possible into this issue, we may have inadvertently missed a name. It doesn't mean we value your help less.)

The full details on the demonstrators weren't ready at press time, but please know we do appreciate every one who was there, and we'll thank you again in detail in January. For now, we want to thank

Clare Gagnon, and The Gem Carvers and The Faceters.

Corey Kuepper was our hands-on opal cabbing demonstrator.

A special thanks to **Russ Madsen**, Newsletter Editor and **Annette Bryant** for their efforts in getting the news out!

Thank you Speakers!

Barbara McCondra Koroit Opal

Tim & Barbara Thomas

Advanced Opal Cutting

Dr. Walt Johnson

Gem Identification

Larry Hoskinson & Leslie Neff Mining in Coober Pedy

Wish you all could have been there! There was so much good information, and it was so well presented, we should have had standing room only. Plan now to be there next year!

-Carol Bova President *

Name Badges...

Price per badge is \$5 which includes the badge itself and engraving of up to two lines of text: one line for your first and last name and, if you wish, a second line for nickname or if applicable, your opal related business name. These engraving options give members flexibility to include many types of identification.

Please allow 3 to 4 weeks for completion of engraving.

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In Memoriam

LOIS DIXON
November 24, 2000

Our sympathies and prayers go out to Bob Dixon and the Dixon family.

Bob's wife Lois was recovering from a second surgery in November when her condition turned for the worse. Lois passed away Friday, November 24, 2000.

Let us each take a moment and remember Lois' everpleasant disposition. The world is a smaller place for her passing.



ON ATTITUDE...

IF YOU THINK YOU CAN,
OR YOU THINK YOU CAN'T...
-YOU'RE RIGHT!!!

position statement of management to employees
Papa John's Pizza
Lake Havasu City, Arizona



PLEASE NOTE!!! The American Opal Society assumes no responsibility for injury or damage due to accidents or carelessness. Members and quests assume all risks during club activities.

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Editor—Russ Madsen

Please address all inquiries to: The Opal Express,

P.O. Box 4875, Garden Grove, CA 92842-4875 E-mail 76559.1366@compuserve.com (Deadline for Items: 15th of the month prior to each Issue)

HO |||

IT'S TIME FOR OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY POTLUCK !!!





HO |||



PLEASE SEE "ITEMIZATION" ON PAGE 4
FOR DETAILS ON WHAT TO BRING AND
HOW TO SIGN UP





American Opal Society Membership Renewal

Thank you for continuing to support your American Opal Society!

TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP (Select one)	DUES / RATES* (select one)**	AMOUNT PAID			
All US Addresses including Alaska and Hawaii	\$25.00				
2) International Members = All addresses outside of US Addresses	\$30.00				
3) Additional Badges/each	\$5.00	10 N E.			
** <u>SENIOR DISCOUNT</u> = Age 65 or over deduct \$5.00	<\$5.00>				
Name badge (optional) \$5.00 each - includes engraving	\$ 2.2				
TOTAL PAID – DUES less Senior Discount plus Badge 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

MEMBERSHIP ROSTER: Yes, inc (Please circle any of these→ NAM	E / ADDRESS / PHONE / E-M	AIL / WEBSITE if you prefer	a published AOS n a partial listing)	without your signature here you will not be included in the member info list.
(If yes please sign here) DEALER LIST: Yes, include my na	me/address on a list provided	to Opal Dealers selling at the	most recent	
Opal Show. (if yes, please sign here)		Date	-	Without your signature here you will not be included in the dealer roster.
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PHONE: Home	Business ()	FAX		
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ITEMIZATION

2

ITEM: CHRISTMAS PARTY PLANS

AOS Members' Holiday Dinner is December 14th

Please call Carol Bova to make your reservations for the Holiday Dinner on our regular meeting night of Thursday, Dec. 14. Call 1-818-951-1402 and reply to Murray or Carol. If you reach the voice mail, please leave your name, phone number, how many are coming and either Carol or Murray will call you back to confirm the number in your party and what dish you plan to bring.

Please call as soon as you can, the club will be buying the main entre's and we do need a count of guests. Thanks!

The AOS will supply the main dishes and beverages as well as paper plates and dinnerware.

We ask members to sign up to bring a side dish, or a salad, or a desert.

This is a fun evening of Christmas cheer (and GREAT food). Please make plans now to attend!

ITEM: YEAR END DOOR PRIZES Bob Dixon requests donations for year-end door prizes to be presented at the Christmas Party, please call Bob at 714-534-5063 if you can help out.

★

ITEM: NEW PO BOX REMINDER our new PO Box is open for mailings — American Opal Society, Inc., P. O. Box 4875, Garden Grove, CA 92842-4875. ♣

ITEM: TUCSON & QUARTZITE SHOWS will be starting in a few short weeks. Watch the January Opal Express for details.

ITEM: WORKSHOP SCHEDULE MODIFIED

Please check Page 5 for the modified workshop schedule for December and January. Due to the holidays there are certain days which will not be available.

ITEM: PFUSA – after 12 years, public land use advocacy group, People For the USA has announced operations will cease effective December, 2000. The organization's Winter, 2000 issue is the final edition of it's newsletter Grassroots USA.

ITEM: National Geographic: In a discussion about the migration patterns of early humans, the following observation appears in the December 2000 issue regarding the possible arrival of humans in Australia. "Researchers think the first people to settle in Australia crossed 80 miles of open water some 60,000 years ago."

OPAL SHOW DOOR PRIZE DONATIONS

On page 5 we congratulate the Door Prize winners, here we want to give a big Thank You to the many Opal Show dealers and AOS club members for their generous Door Prize Donations.

(Please Note...this list is definitely incomplete and we apologize in advance!)

The African Bazaar
Harry Martin

Amore Gems Jos. Halim

Bovagems.com Carol Bova

Campbell Gemstones
Alice & Don Rogers

Carter's Creations
Terrell Carter

Casa de Lumbre Salvadore Chavez

Freeform Creations Steve Solovieff

Gems & Opals
Lapidary International
David Burton
Stan McCall

Larry Hoskinson Leslie Neff

Greg Howell's
Quality Gems
Greg & Ginnie Howell

In A Flash Tony Thurber

K.P. Custom Design Ken Pleasants

Land of Wonder Opal Eric Scott

Products, Inc.
Donna Schultze

Opalcutter.com Wes Roth

Outback Gems Barbara McCondra

Owyhee Sunset Mines Stan Pegram

S. K. International Shinko Kuramochi Lin

Semco Eden Opals Maria de Luz

Opal by Tibara *Tim & Barbara Thomas*

Fine Opals & Books About Them Len Toelk

Vajda Group International Sean Hopkins

Russ Madsen

Mike Kowalsky

Gerry Crister

Pam Strong

Sammy's Creative Adornments

Jim Pisani

The Faceters

Gary of L.B.

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Opal & Gem Show

DOOR PRIZES: Bob Dixon offered thanks to the many folks who donated door prizes. We had the best array in memory this year! See the list of prizes and winners below.

RAFFLE: Moreover, this year, thanks to Bob's efforts we added a raffle. The main raffle prize was a small buffer/ grinder combination unit with a flex-shaft tool attachment

In addition there was a Pittsburg flexshaft. This battery operated hand tool (similar to a Dremel) came with fittings and accessories.

Stan McCall provided 3 fine wire wrapped drusy pendants.

Speaking of prizes and raffles, Bob reminds everyone that there will be a year-end prize drawing from the monthly attendance tickets. Drawing will be during the Christmas Party...another good reason to be on hand that night!

DOOR PRIZE WINNERS: (Special thanks to Carol Bova for preparing the list of door prize winners below.)

Congratulations! In addition to the door prizes picked up at last month's show, door prizes are en route to the lucky winners listed below who could not be present for the actual drawing. We hope you enjoy them!

- George Andrus, Van Nuys, CA, cat's eve tourmaline rough
- ◆Allison Atkinson, Riverside, CA, drusy iridescent pyrite cab
- ◆Ramona Bommer, El Cajon, CA, Honey opal rough
- ◆ Carole Braun, Long Beach, CA, opal earrings
- ◆Bill Burns, Monterey Park, CA, drusy iridescent pyrite cab
- *Don Clarke, Lakewood, CA, buffer-grinder
- ◆Dayna Cunningham, Riverside, CA, opal cab
- ◆C. Godbold, Manhattan Beach, CA,

wire-wrapped opal pendant

- Milton Green, Irvine, CA, diamond point bit set
- ◆ Andrew Helms, Shadow Hills, CA, Len Cram book
- ◆Meria Hill, Riverside, CA, opal pendant
- ◆ Steve Hurt, Ventura, CA, Opal Queen of Gems Diary
- ◆P. Israel, Newport Beach, CA, Photo-Atlas of Minerals CD
- *Bill Jackson, Greenfield, CA, mineral collection
- *James Kutzner, San Diego, CA, very large faceted stone
- ◆M. J. Kyte, Altadena, CA, rough and cut fire agate
- *Jim Lambert, Garden Grove, CA, mother-of-pearl pendant
- ◆Darrell Lovell, Anaheim, CA, opal ring
- + Sharon Midland, Moreno Valley, CA, 4 pc pliers kit
- ◆ Judy Miller, Herriman, UT, opal ring
- ◆ Don Mills, West Valley, UT, opal cab
- ◆ Ruby Patak, Huntington Beach, CA,
 - 2 oz. jar Lightning Ridge rough
- ◆ Ervin Steele, Anaheim, CA, Indian jasper slab
- ◆ Courtney Tanner, Redlands, CA, opal ring
- *Denny Thomason, Cerritos, CA, Mexican opal rough
- ◆Don Thompson, Paramount, CA, pearl and bed necklace
- ◆ Terry Vasseur, Hawthorne, CA, Mexican opal cab
- *Larry Voorhies, Orange, CA, opal pendant
- ◆Charles Westerheut, Costa Mesa, CA,

carved Yowah pendant

- ◆ Chuck Williams, Bellflower, CA, Mexican opal bird carving
- + Gordon Wilson, Del Mar, CA, petrified wood
- ◆Bea Wolfe, San Juan Capistrano, CA, diamond bits set 🏶

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WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Be sure to check here for workshop schedule updates. The dates listed below are those available to the AOS in our WORKSHOP AT WALKER Jr HIGH SCHOOL. The shop can be opened to members on Wednesday nights. Please continue to contact Stan McCall by calling him at Gems & Opals (714) 827-5680 if you plan to attend a shop session.

December 2000

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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January 2001

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= Available Workshop dates

WORKSHOP RULES

= Board Meeting date

= General Meeting date

Please see calendar above for monthly shop

schedule.

- ⇒ 1) Shop may only be used by AOS members
- ⇒ 2) Shop users must sign liability waiver.
- ⇒ 3) Shop users must sign in. Shop supervisor will maintain sign-in list and collect usage fees.
- ⇒ 4) Shop usage fees: effective immediately...SHOP USAGE FEE IS \$3 PER SESSION.
- ⇒ 5) To assist us in scheduling, shop sessions need to be reserved in advance. Please contact Stan McCall or any member of the board of directors to reserve shop time.



California Federation of Mineralogical Societies
62nd Annual Show and Convention

GEM, JEWELRY & MINERAL SHOW



June 22, 23, 24, 2001 Fri. & Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5

CALIFORNIA MID-STATE FAIR 2198 Riverside Avenue Paso Robles, California

*Gems*Jewelry*Mineruls*Fossils*Rocks*

*Petrified Wood*Youth Activies*Games*

*SharksTeeth*150 Exhibits*50 Denters*

*Lectures*Demonstrations*Food & Beverage*

*Campground*Raffle*Much More

ADMISSION: \$4.00 ADULTS-\$3.00 UNDER 18 & OVER 55-FREE UNDER 12 AND SCOUTS IN UNIFORM.

BOSTED BY THE SANTA LUCIA ROCKHOUNDS. CO-CHAIR BEA AND SHERM GRISELLE, 2401 NIDERER ROAD, PASO ROBLES, CA (805) 238-4366 E-mail theoriselles@ican net

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Advertisement

Rough Australian Opal

We have recently returned, with suitcases full of opal, from a buying trip to the Australian opal fields. Write or call for a free Price List/Newsletter. With inventory from Coobery Pedy, Lambina, Mintabie and Lightning Ridge we can supply you with rough opal from \$5.00/oz to \$9,000/oz.

Satisfaction guaranteed. You may return any unaltered parcel for a full refund.

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Visit our webpage at www.villagesmithyopals.com

Huge Fossil Whale Vertebra to be Displayed at CFMS 2001 Show

Discovered northwest of San Miguel, California, the ancient whale vertebra dates from the Middle Miocene Epoch 10-12 million years ago.

The vertebra is one of the largest ever discovered. Whales during this time averaged 15 feet in length. It is estimated that the whale from which this vertebra came measured over 72 feet in length. The whales of this epoch swam in huge lagoons and deep bays. They shared these water bodies with the largest predator shark to ever live, the Carcharocles Megaladon which reached a length of 60 feet or more.

The vertebra will be on display during the CFMS 2001 Show in Paso Robles. Come to the show and be amazed by this huge and rare fossil discovery.

Bea and Sherm Griselle

Santa Lucia Rockhounds (host club for the 2001 CFMS Show)
(EXCERPTED FROM AN ARTICLE IN THE NOVEMBER 2000 CFMS NEWSLETTER)

Advertisement

Carol J. Bova
Lapidary Rough for Cabbing
Cat's Eye Tourmaline
Whitesail Alpine Opal
Hawkeye & Tigereye
(818) 951-1402 bova@bovagems.com

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Koroit Nuts

...Koroit opal is similar to a type of Yowah nut material. The Yowah opal field is 160 kilometers west of Cunnamulla while the Koroit opal field is 85 kms north of Cunnamulla which itself is located in the Southwest corner of Queensland Australia.

The opal in this area is loosely referred to as boulder opal, commonly found in a belt of cretaceous sedimentary rock commonly known as the Winton Formation which extends from Hungerford on the NSW border, up through Cunnamulla, Quiplie Longreach, Winton and finally to Kynuna (real waltzing Matilda Country). A distance of approximately 1000 kilometers. The reason I am so sure of these locations is because I am getting them out of an Australian Gold Gem and Treasure magazine (Oct 95), which is the only information I have available on geographical differences relating to Yowah and Koroit.

Here are a few quick notes:

The Koroit material when cut produces dust that is brick red so expect the same out of anything in the vicinity of any water spray to become brick red in color. It washes out of my clothes without staining them and soap takes it off the skin with no problem. However, it may stain concrete.

The Koroit nut is similar to a type of Yowah nut with veins of opal running through sandstone. I believe it is much more stable than Yowah because although it has some sand stone on the outer skin it is mainly ironstone bonded to the opal. The areas where care must be exercised are pockets of sandstone that are soft and which sometimes divide a solid mass of individual nuts. A thin slab of this grouping of nuts has naturally weakened areas with sand and or voids. This is where an Opticon type of treatment would be beneficial. I have found that most nuts seem naturally to be an optimal size for cabbing.

Some of the opal sections or seams are thick. If a thick section of opal is encountered it is best not to use a coarse belt or sanding disk for shaping because it will almost always produce a crack from the heat. Diamond wheels and continuous water are the best ways to shape the thick opal.

If a really nice piece of opal is found I do some rough shaping on the cabbing machine and then switch to 4 sheets of wet or dry paper 400, 600, 800 and 1,500 grit with a sanding block and water to complete the stone by hand. I polish with tin oxide and expect some voids in the matrix surface.

The Nut has a real nice skin of opal at the least. Once you determine where the center of the nut is you can sneak up on the skin or center if one exists and expose a nicely domed section of opal. This is one of the best ways to show the inner hidden beauty of the Koroit nut. It also forms the top of the cab and all that remains is to shape the perimeter and polish the top. A fully rounded opal from a Koroit nut void of any matrix is said to be of very high value.

That is about it for now. Have a great day!

Dennis aquadennis@aol.com

(FROM LAPIDARY DIGEST #274 05/05/00)

Safety Report

Shop Ventilation:

A lot of things that you take a torch to in your shop are definitely not good for your respiratory system. If you wonder whether you are at risk, try this experiment. Light a candle and place it where you work. If you can smell the candle, you need to improve your ventilation. Cross ventilation is probably best. You want to form an air stream that flows from behind you, across your workplace, and then goes outside. A typical arrangement might include two inlet fans mounted 5 to 6 feet above ground, and 1 or 2 outlet fans mounted near ground level on the opposite side. Mount the inlet fans several feet apart so your body doesn't block the flow. Again, try the candle test to verify good airflow.

(FROM BRECCIA 09/00)

Hand Trimming Opal Rough and Other Materials

Some folks just don't have a trimsaw, but don't let that stop you. Just buy yourself a jewelers sawframe and some diamond blades. These are on eBay all the time, some kits selling for under 10 bucks; these have a frame, 1 or 2 diamond blades, and 100+ other blades.

If you use a hand saw, it's advisable to build a small wood work rest. Take a piece of 1x4 and cut a V shaped notch at one end. Clamp this down on your work table so the notch is jutting out from the table into the air. Make sure its solid and firmly held. Keep your blade in the V as you're cutting. Remember that you're not really cutting so much as grinding, so keep things wet.

James james@hutch.org
(FROM LAPIDARY DIGEST #274 05/05/00)

Polishing Boulder Opal Ironstone

There's been some good suggestions on cutting Koroit matrix which is of course often very hard and glasslike, and thus quite easy to bring up to a good shine. This is not quite the same with a lot of matrix and ironstone from the other Queensland fields such as Winton and Quilpie. Most cutters can get a reasonable shine on this by finishing on worn 600 sandpaper and 50,000 diamond grit. Some say 15,000 is better, but from my experience it still leaves something to be desired.

I have seen some boulder cutting from HK which looks like a mirror...does anyone know whether they are giving it some special treatment before cutting...or is it simply in the cutting process.. would be interested to know.

Wes

(FROM LAPIDARY DIGEST #275 05/11/00)

Compatability of Backing Materials

(the article which follows addresses a discussion about doublets and triplets which appeared in Lapidary Digest)

<<One respondent on this subject mentioned backing opals with material of a similar coefficient of expansion. ???? Enlighten us, please. I have a box of Spencer opals sitting here ready to work on and a box of thin slices for backing; obsidian, Basenite, black jade, etc. Offband I would assume that silicon dioxide materials would be preferable. But where on earth would we find information on coefficients of expansion for gem materi-

My apologies for sounding too much like an engineer.

The coefficient of expansion is simply the amount a material expands or contracts at different temperatures. When gluing two materials together it's best to pick materials with similar physical characteristics to minimize stresses on the glue bond.

When I make a doublet or triplet I don't want it coming apart five or ten years from now. Just use stones with a similar hardness & specific gravity to the stone you're gluing and the coefficients of expansion should be close enough.

For hardness and specific gravity info, any good rock and mineral book should have that info. Also on the web, check out http://web.wt.net/~daba/ Mineral/index.htm or the International Gem Society @ http://205.254.196.60/

You're right, silicon dioxide materials would be the best if they are in the same hardness and specific gravity range as opal. Quartz is really a bit on the extreme end of the list, but what else can you use for a good clear top for a triplet? Sometimes you can get black opal potch for next to nothing from some of the Australian opal suppliers.

Of the items you listed, I would go with the basenite. That's what I've had the best luck with. Obsidian will work but it's not the best and I would stay away from the black

As far as finding information on specific coefficients of expansion, a good place to start looking would be in the local college library in the chemistry or mineralogy sections or in the engineering section under the material science.

Noel noel@iolusa.com (FROM LAPIDARY DIGEST #197 01/23/99)

For what it is worth, I have been making Spencer opal triplets and doublets since 1979 and I use mostly black basalt but have had good luck with dark Teton Jade. Both of these materials have served me well and have never had one separate. I once even used some black Bruneau jasper and it worked as well.

Val VDmad78@aol.com (FROM LAPIDARY DIGEST #197 01/23/99)

Did you know ... that according to the American Geological Institute Glossary of Geological Terms, "rockhound" is a term first used by oil drillers for geologists who often smell rock samples takenfrom well cuttings for the odor of oil. They used to say, "He hunts for oil like a hound dog," which evolved into "rockhound."

(FROM TIPS & CHIPS 01/98 VIA THE NUGGET 10/00)

Backing up Opals

> In LapDigest #195 & #196 much was said about uneven backs on Opals and the problems mounting them. My guestion is, other than doublets, are there suitable materials to pad the back of opal freeforms when mounting them for pendants etc.. I've heard of sawdust etc. Any suggestions would be greatly appreciated. 🌞

chestnut@mindspring.com

(ABOVE FROM LAPIDARY DIGEST #197 01/23/99)

Answers followed in Lapidary Digest #198:

> ... I've used small rubber o rings and silicon seal, others have used tin foil, cardboard and many other things.

Giovanna kfletcher@citilink.com

...When gluing

two materials

_together it's

best to pick

materials with

similar physical

characteristics

to minimize

stresses on the

glue

bond.

> Chestnut asked about loose backing materials for opals. If you are mounting opal in bezels you can use loose material to back it, such as sawdust, to level out an uneven stone. I have used many things to do this and find that something more solid is easier! Try foam insulating sheets, or several thicknesses of playing cards, or most any malleable material. You just need something that will fill in the gaps to support your stone. The hardness doesn't matter, since expansion on this will be virtually nonexistent and it isn't attached to the stone. If repair work is ever needed it will be replaced.

Epoxy also works well, just take modeling clay, mounded up with a well in the center. Place the opal, upside down into the well and press into the clay. Pour epoxy on the back of the stone and let harden. Grind to fit bezel. You can reuse the modeling clay a lot of times for a whole lot of backings this way.

HTH, Sue opaleyes1@webtv.net

> ...Another is to build up the backing with metal, but everyone seems to like the idea of something between opal and metal to act as shock absorber. It seems to me that a black filler putty or RTV would be a good thing. I mean as a base, cured before setting the stone, not gluing the stone down with it....

I took apart a turquoise ring for my wife in order to mount a pieco of amazonite that we mined and then cabbed in it. This had a piece of what appeared to be felt under the stone. That's another idea that seems to make sense.

All the best, Bob Lombardi blombard@iu.net

> In response to the question about back(ing up) opals, I've used both thin slices of cork and auto gasket material. Both work because they have some give for uneven backs. Also, they are especially useful in bezel set opal rings because they have a shock absorption value. • stoneage@vermontel.com

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