



# Eastern Indiana Gem & Geological Society ROCK PICKINGS

P.O. Box 1724 • Richmond, IN 47375 • eiggs.weebly.com • facebook.com/EasternIndianaGemGeologicalSocietyEIGGS

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## Memberships:

Annual dues  
\$15 Individuals  
\$20 Families

### Please send dues to:

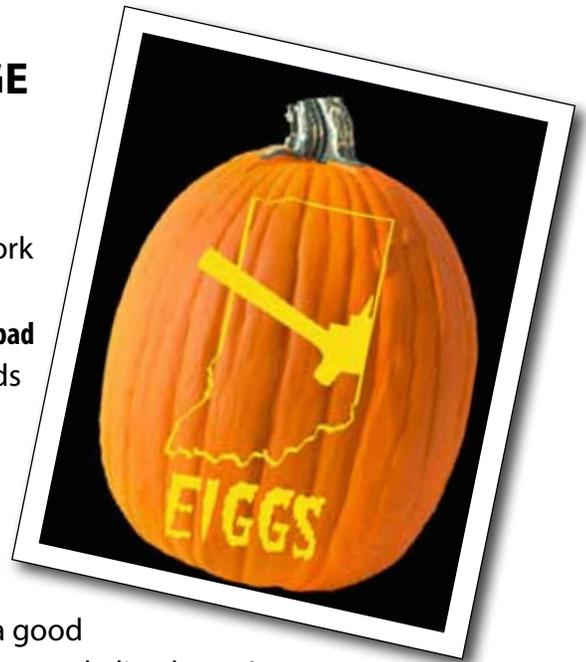
EIGGS  
PO Box 1724  
Richmond, IN 47375

 **Next monthly meeting: November 5, 6:30 p.m.**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello, Rockhounds!

Smarrelli has completed the concrete work in front of the club house. **NOTICE: It is very important that no one park or drive on the new pad until the END OF OCTOBER.** The concrete needs to cure properly. The area should be roped off, but if it is not, please stay off of it anyway. There is plenty of parking on the side of the club house.



Clean-up Day #2 was a success! We had a good turn out and got most of the things on the to-do list done. At the next meeting we will take a vote on the next clean up date.

Please show up to our November 5 meeting. We will be stuffing grab bags and need all the hands we can get. The more members who show up, the faster it will go; plus, it is great to see everyone.

Mark

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New Concrete Pad



New front concrete pad

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Clean-up Day, Part 2



Dave Straw

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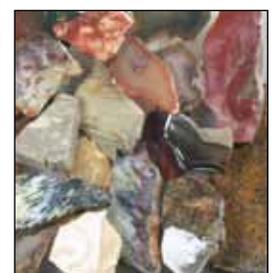
Jeweler's Bench



Susan Kuhlman's silver ring

### PAGE 5

Rock Sale 



Slab sale, Oct. 31, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

# MEETING MINUTES: OCTOBER 1, 2015

EIGGS met on October 1, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.

Members in attendance were Patrick Pierce, Reagan Pierce, Emma Pierce, Joe Wirrig, Dave Straw, Mark Lisota, Charlene Reidenbach, John LaMont, John Morse, Mary Ann Morse, Judy Burton, Matt Rudicil, Alma Glisson, Deanna Smith, Jim Lucas, Marty Lucas, Susan Kuhlman, Barbara Kuhlman, Danny Spurgeon, Lisa Morris, Judith Echano-Medina, Mike Ragen, David Lundquist, John Terhaar and Johnathon Terhaar. Guest Margie Grimes also attended the meeting.

## **Treasurer's Report**

Expenses: \$689 (\$348 utilities, \$23 building, \$194 shop, \$76 cleanup day, \$28 soda, \$17 newsletter) Income: \$686

## **Concrete Update**

Dave spoke with Smarelli Contractors, work should be completed by October 9. (Update: See page 3 of this newsletter. Dave wants to remind everyone not to park on the new slab until the end of October.)

## **Grant Update**

The Wayne County Foundation denied the grant request. Dave will explore the Gannett grant. He said the best approach may be to focus the grant on preservation of our historic building. Joe suggested contacting a grant writer. Judy will try to contact someone at the Troy Club.

## **Air Conditioner Update**

Joe priced a Mitsubishi mini-split at \$4,000. This unit would cool both the meeting room and the shop. Dave found a few window units for approximately \$400 but the BTU ratings were half of the current unit. There is an offer of a free used unit from member Dedric Harrell in Winchester. Dave will follow up on this offer.

## **Clean-up Day, part 2**

Mark reminded those in attendance that the second Club Clean-up Day would be Oct. 3 at 9 a.m. (Update: See page 4 of this newsletter.) Projects to undertake: priming the display case fronts and tightening the backs, gluing specimens on cards for the grab bags, painting the hallway, patching the roof, removing the old water heaters in basement, cleaning up outside the garage, removing trash from the garage, removing plastic and insulation in garage (in order to find roof leaks).



■ After helping his dad at the Clean-up Day, Nathan Pierce takes time out to enjoy a donut. Nathan enjoyed the donut, but his favorite part of the day was finding two toads in the basement.

## **Insurance Update**

Dave received a reduction in coverage letter regarding the insurance. Dave is going to have the insurance re-quoted.

## **Grab Bag Assembly**

Nov. 5, 6:30 p.m.

## **TRICK OR TREAT?**

It's no trick: it's grab bag time, and treats will be waiting for you when you come to the November meeting to help prepare the bags.

You can count on fun times with friends as we fill 150 bags with eight mineral specimens. This is one more task that can be marked off the list prior to the annual gem and mineral show in March.

The minerals are already glued onto the label cards, so all that is left to do is stuff the bags. With plenty of volunteers and an assembly line set-up, the task will be quickly completed, leaving more time for treats with your rock club friends.

The meeting will be held at the club house at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 5. See you there!

## **Basement Update**

Dehumidifier is working well; water situation seems to be improved.

## **Scholarship Update**

Scholarship Update: We can donate to the Earlham College Geology Department field trip. Dave will deliver the check to Earlham professor Andy Moore.

## **Show Update**

Last year's caterer will return this year. Charlene will place ads in *Rock and Gem*, *Gad About*, etc. Judy has found some rock and gem books for \$1 each that could generate a profit in the silent auction. Grab bags will need to be put together next month. Fliers will be printed soon.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m. on motion by Charlene, which was seconded by Joe.

# NEW CONCRETE INSTALLED

by Dave Straw

The basement / concrete pad project started several months ago when it was noticed that we had problems in the basement due to water. There was serious freeze/thaw damage to the foundation and mold was growing on the wood structural timbers.

We also noticed that the old concrete pad was tilted toward the building, which caused rain and melting snow to drain toward the foundation. After consulting with board members and four or five contractors, it was decided that an obvious first step toward drying out the basement was to do something about the pad. A decision was made to replace the concrete pad rather than just taking it out and replacing it with gravel.

We received quotes from more than three contractors, and Smarrelli in Richmond was low at \$5,984. The contract was signed June 11, 2015 and it took until Oct. 15 to have the project completed.

The old pad was removed Monday, Oct. 12 and was replaced Wednesday, Oct. 14. The new pad tilts toward U.S. 40 by four inches from the foundation to the far edge of the new pad.

In addition, a new drainage system was installed underground to drain the downspouts at each end of the front of the building into the storm sewer on Route 40. Also, a material called "waterstop" was put in place between the foundation and the new pad.

The only remaining work on this particular project



1. New concrete was poured Wednesday, Oct. 14.

is to replace the small set of steps from the front porch to the pad. The club members can do this without much trouble.

We hope that this will go a long way toward reducing the water problem in the basement. We will not be sure until we have a lot of rain, and there could be other sources of water. At any rate, we felt it made sense to do this as a first step.

It should be noted that the "rock garden" area just outside the garage door to the storage area is a mess. The concrete is badly cracked up and the short walls are out of place. We may want to think about how to handle that some time in the future.

Please note that no one should drive a vehicle onto the new pad until the end of October.

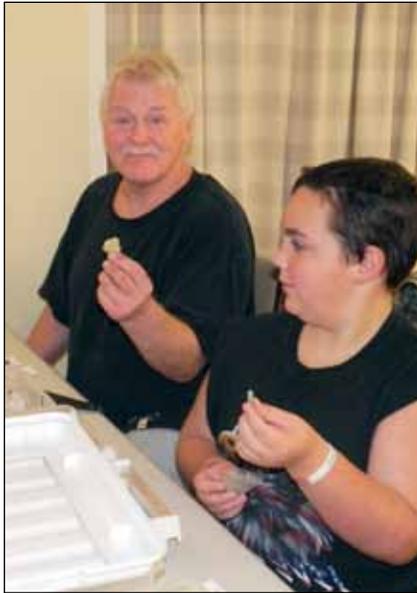


2. New pipes drainage pipes were installed when the old concrete was removed Monday, Oct. 12. 3. Once the concrete was removed, the soil was leveled. 4. Full view of the new concrete.

# 🔧 CLUB MEMBERS TACKLE CLEAN-UP DAY PROJECTS, OCT. 3

■ Mike Ragen and Johnathon Terhaar spent part of their Saturday morning gluing eight different minerals to label cards for the rock show grab bags. Club members glued over 1,200 specimens to cards.

■ As water heaters were being removed from the basement, Mr. Toad supervises the clean-up.



**B**uilding on the success of the first Club Clean-up Day in September, 11 club members gathered on Saturday, Oct. 3 to tackle the tasks set for Clean-up Day, Part 2.

Workers applied two coats of primer to the display cases, cleaned saws and glued rock specimens to cards, while Patrick Pierce and John Terhaar removed water heaters, a water tank and miscellaneous debris from the basement. While there they found that club members share the house with two toads, which were named Toadsie and Mr. Toad by Patrick's son, Nathan.

The group accomplished many tasks, working from 9 a.m. till 1 p.m., but with a historic property, there is always much to do, in terms of maintenance. The remaining tasks will be discussed at the next meeting, and a date for a third Clean-up Day will be set.

Thanks to the 11 members who participated: Judy Burton, Mark Lisota, Jim Lucas, Marty Lucas, Lisa Morris, Nathan Pierce, Patrick Pierce, Mike Ragen, John Terhaar, Johnathon Terhaar and Dave Straw.



## TASKS COMPLETED:

- Mineral samples were glued to name cards
- Doors of display cases were given two coats of primer
- Display case bolts were tightened
- Drywall in front entry was replaced and painted
- Faulty saw room hose connector was replaced
- Old humidifier, hot water heaters and miscellaneous wood removed from the basement
- Oil changed in chop saw
- General clean up in the saw room completed

## TASKS REMAINING:

- Apply second coat of pitch on the garage roof (rained out on the 2nd Clean-up Day)
- Apply faux wood grain finish on display fronts (Susan will do this)
- Scrape peeling paint on second floor landing and repaint
- Finish clean up behind small garage
- Remove unused headstone from side of building
- Replace outside door to basement
- Repair/remove loose metal flashing from roof above saw room
- Remove trash from garage
- Replace upstairs doorway to roof
- Replace the saw room outside door

■ Hoisting the first old water heater, Patrick Pierce brings it up the stairs from the basement. Two water heaters, a water tank and an old dehumidifier were removed in the clean-up.

■ After spreading out drop cloths, Marty Lucas applies the first coat of primer to the display case fronts. The fronts would later be given a faux wood grain finish by Susan Kuhlman.

■ In the basement, Mark Lisota checks on progress and assesses other work that will need to be completed in the future.



# ROCK SALE SCHEDULED FOR OCT. 31

**D**eserve a Halloween treat? You can score some sweet rocks at the Halloween Rock Sale at the club house Saturday, October 31 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Deb Chagares is selling some of her inventory. "I just have too many rocks -- more than I will ever get to in this lifetime, so I am happy to sell them to people who will use them," Deb said.

Part of the proceeds from the sale will go to EIGGS.

While some cabs will be available, most of the stones will be slabs. There will also be a few chunks of stone to slab.

Slabs in the sale will include chrysocolla, malachite, several types of obsidian, including silver sheen obsidian and rainbow obsidian, Montana agate, Wonderstone, dragon's blood jasper, Eden Valley petrified wood and Willow Creek jasper.



These slab collections are from [texasrockshop.com](http://texasrockshop.com), but Deb's will be equally lovely!



## VIKING WEAVE WORKSHOP OFFERED NOVEMBER 19

**T**richinopoly chain, also known as Viking weave chain, or Viking knit chain, is luckily much easier to create than to pronounce.

To help members learn, Danny Spurgeon is offering a two-hour Viking knitting workshop just in time for the holidays.

The workshop will be held at the club house on Thursday, Nov. 19, from 6-8 p.m. The workshop cost will be \$10 per person. To register for the workshop, contact Danny at [joseph\\_6841@yahoo.com](mailto:joseph_6841@yahoo.com)

### Viking Weave Workshop

Thursday, Nov. 19

6-8 p.m. at the clubhouse

Cost: \$10

Register with Danny Spurgeon  
[joseph\\_6841@yahoo.com](mailto:joseph_6841@yahoo.com)

In the workshop, each participant will create a Viking weave bracelet to take home. Enough wire to complete the project will be provided, and dowel rods and draw plates will be available for use in the workshop.

Club members who want to learn advanced techniques, such

as how to wrap a cabochon or how to create a flat woven bracelet, may sign up for a second, more advanced workshop which will be held Tuesday, Dec. 1 from 6-8 p.m. at the clubhouse. The cost for this second workshop will be \$10 per person.

Participants may buy extra wire from Danny for \$8-9 per spool. He has wire in a variety of colors and gauges. He has dowels for sale for \$1 and



Alexandra Shariff Designs [www.etsy.com/shop/AlexSharDesigns](http://www.etsy.com/shop/AlexSharDesigns)  
<http://www.jewelrylessons.com/tutorial/viking-knit-chain>

Corian draw plates for \$10.

According to sources online, Viking weaving was a process used by Anglo-Saxon Norse mainly during the 8th Century through the 10th Century.

This type of wire weaving has been found in ancient graves and treasure hoards. It was used for necklaces, bracelets, edging for clothing and artistic trim. Wire weaving has also been found in Roman, Greek and Byzantine archaeological digs from the 1st century B.C. to 4th century A.D.





# EIGGS GOES INTERNATIONAL

## Welcome to new member Judith Echano Medina

When you check the club's membership rolls, you'll find many members from Indiana and Ohio, but you'll only find one member from Spain -- Judith Echano Medina, who joined the club in September.

In the past month she has been a frequent visitor to the lapidary lab, attended the October meeting and participated in the wire-wrapping workshop.

A Spanish citizen, Judith came to the United States seven years ago in a teaching

exchange program.

She teaches French at Connersville High School and sponsors French Club, French Honor Society and the Petanque Club.

Collecting and cutting rocks is a new hobby for Judith, but she enjoys crafts and making handmade gifts for friends and family members.

"Among all the things that I have learned at the club, what I like the most is working with the rocks. I love showing my work to others. I have only been a member for a month, so many

of the tasks are still challenging. One of my goals is to learn the names of the rocks I work on," Judith said.

Judith enjoys staying busy and spends her free time crocheting, reading, watching "Game of Thrones," watching the Food Network, cooking, traveling, and studying.

"Since I've been in the United States, I earned a Bachelor's degree in English through IU East; I am working on a Graduate Certificate, and plan on getting my Masters," Judith said.



September 17 was club member Judith Echano Medina's first night in the lapidary lab. She picked out some slabs, traced her patterns and learned to use the trim saw, the wheels and the dop pot. By the end of the night she was ready to learn how to girdle and dome her cabs.

## WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

A warm welcome goes out to Joy Ingerman and Lea Ann Robinson, the newest members of the Eastern Indiana Gem and Geological Society

### Joy Ingerman

**Occupation:** Retired elementary teacher

**How did your interest in rocks, gems or minerals develop?** My interest in rocks developed when I took geology in college. I am interested



in making jewelry and enjoy experimenting with the different stones. I like to try the different stones with different metals and beads.

**What do you hope to learn?** Currently, I am learning to wire-wrap, and soon I hope to learn to Viking knit. I want to learn how to cut and cab stones soon, as well.

**What areas interest you most?** Because I like to design jewelry, I am looking forward to being able to use my own stones soon. I like

the idea of completely designing a project from start to finish.

**What have you learned so far?** How to wire wrap a cabochon.

**What are a few of your other hobbies or interests?** I enjoy reading, traveling, jewelry-making.

**Anything else you want to share?** I was born in and grew up in Richmond, then moved to Columbus, then Connersville. I have a long-haired dachshund name Charlie (because he is a chocolate color).

### Lea Ann Robinson

**Occupation:** Retired elementary teacher

**How did your interest in rocks, gems or minerals develop?** My uncle was a lapidarian. He and my dad made jewelry together. Dad was the



silversmith. I also enjoyed collecting rocks and fossils as a kid.

**What do you hope to learn?** I hope to learn how to identify stones, as well as cut and polish stones to set in jewelry.

**What areas interest you most?** Identification and cutting and polishing.

**What have you learned so far?** How to wire wrap a cabochon.

**What are a few of your other hobbies or interests?** I enjoy knitting, reading, gardening, and traveling.

**Anything else you want to share?** My husband, Jim, and I have been retired from the Fayette County School Corporation for three years. We have one son, Scott, who is married to Tia Hardy. They have one child, Seda, who was born in April of 2015. They reside in Berlin, Germany. We have traveled frequently to Berlin and have traveled to destinations including--Istanbul, Turkey; Tenerife, Spain; and Amsterdam, The Netherlands. We live on a tree farm in western Fayette County with our three dogs and a cat.

# ALAA EXCERPT

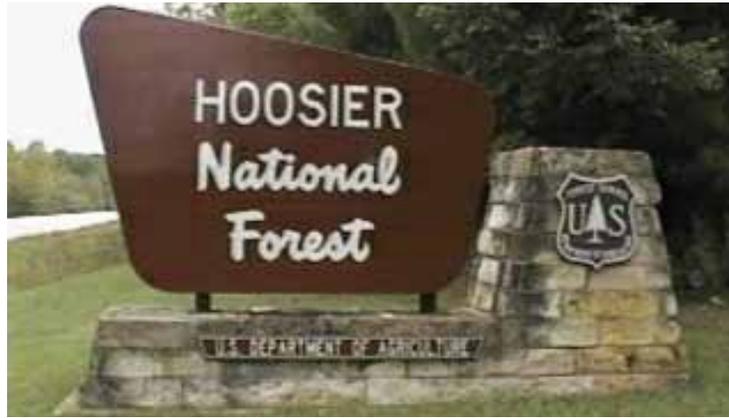


The ALAA reminds rockhounds that many national parks, including the Hoosier National Forest can restrict access and require permits for use

of their land.

The Hoosier National Forest manages many resources to care for the land and serve people. Management protects natural resource values, public health and safety, and is consistent with the forest land and resource management goals outlined in the Forest Plan.

In order to meet these objectives, permits may be required for the occupancy and use of Forest Service land or resources. Additionally, permits assist in funding certain management projects or activities.



Collectors beware; national parks have restrictions in place to limit mineral collection. Check their limitations on line.

### Recreation Passes and Permits:

- Trail Permits for horse & mountain bike use
- Geocaching - policy is being established
- Outfitter/Guide Commercial Permits

### Forest Product Permits:

- Permits are required for collecting edible material, decorative material, etc if used for commercial purposes
- Minerals

• Woody material (includes firewood permit information)

### Events and Commercial Permits:

- Group use - permit needed for groups larger than 75 people
- Outfitter guides

Please contact 812-547-7051 for more information on obtaining a special use permit for use in the Hoosier National Forest.



## MEET THE EIGGS TUESDAY NIGHT SHIFT



Nancy Renfro



Sandy Weadick



Joe Wirrig & Judy Burton



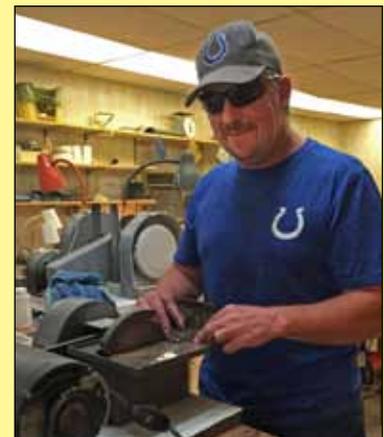
Alma Glisson & Kathy Sheehy

## LAPIDARY LAB

Don't forget that the club offers a weekly lapidary lab on Tuesdays from 6-8 p.m. Members can gain hands-on training and practice. Participants can learn to use slab saws, trim saws, flat laps, grinders and polishers. There is a \$2 fee for equipment usage, and members using the equipment must attend six regular club meetings a year.



Jamie Terhaar & Johnathon Terhaar



John Terhaar



# WORKSHOP TEACHES THE BASICS OF WIRE-WRAPPING PENDANTS

Having just returned from Yellowstone National Park, Deb Chagares was back at the EIGGS club house Tuesday, Oct. 13, teaching a beginning wire-wrap class.

Armed with pliers, cutters, rulers and Sharpie markers, the four participants unwound their wires and learned the basic skills needed to form wire-wrapped pendants.

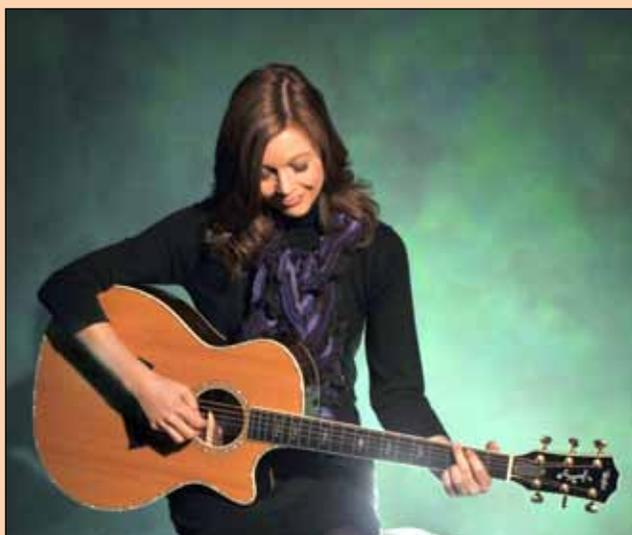
By the end of class, each participant had created a piece. The students returned the next week to learn how to apply the finishing touches.

**WORKSHOPS** As club members, what classes or workshops are you interested in? We have club members with a wide variety of interests and specialties. Let an officer know what interests you and perhaps a workshop can be arranged.



- Aligning the wires, Deb Chagares shows Joy Ingerman the first steps in creating a wire-wrapped pendant.
- After taping the wires together, Deb demonstrates how to measure before adding the binding wraps.
- Focused on her work, Lea Ann Robinson makes sure her wires are aligned before moving on to the next step.
- Using nylon-jawed pliers, Judith Echano Medina straightens the wire she has just measured.

## 🎵 CARRIE NEWCOMER TO PERFORM AT EARLHAM



No promises as to whether Indiana folk musician Carrie Newcomer will sing her song about geodes when she performs at Earlham, Oct. 30, but how many singers do you know who have written tunes praising the simple miracle of a geode? It should be a good show, nonetheless.

### **Earlham Artist and Lecture Series:**

Carrie Newcomer and members of the Earlham choirs

**Date & Time:** Friday, October 30, 2015; 8 p.m.

**Location:** Goddard Auditorium, Carpenter Hall

**Tickets required:** \$10/ adults, \$5/seniors & children under 18.

**Phone:** 765-983-1200

# JEWELER'S BENCH: SUSAN KUHLMAN



**Name:** Susan Kuhlman

**Occupation:**

Frame shop manager,  
picture framer

**From:** Richmond, IN

**Member since:** 2009

**Jewelry media:**

Silver, gold, copper;  
ceramics

**Education:**

B.A. biology;  
Indiana University,  
Bloomington



I have always been interested in geology, rocks and minerals and collected fossils from an early age. Mother was always interested in the natural sciences so when I was young it's just the kind of thing we did.

I've been making my own jewelry from the time I was in grade school --stringing beads, gluing old components together to make new items. Later I taught myself loom work, peyote beading, etc. I have always loved jewelry and believe that being a jewelry consumer enables me to understand what designs might have appeal. I have dabbled in many types of media; paper and fiber, plastic, wood, copper enameling, PMC, and probably others I can't remember.

The most rewarding aspects of this pursuit are being able to make the type of item I would like but can't find anywhere --doing something original that others respond to the same way I would. I like pieces that have a hand-wrought look, not sterile and machine made. It's this subtlety that makes any decorative art form beautiful. I believe jewelry is best when it has a talismanic feel to it, rather than just being a fashion accessory.

I like to start with a drawing generally, although I sometimes get good results just winging it. However, I find that these pieces are not generally anything I would wear. When I draw out the concept, it is a design I have been thinking about for some time --something I have an urge to create because it appeals to me. I am less likely to paint myself into a corner technically, if I plan it out on paper. I can ask Joe Wirrig, my teacher, about any problematic stage in the process. It helps to have an illustration to show him. In silversmithing you have to plan out the fabrication carefully.

You have to use solders with progressively lower melting points for each step otherwise you can undo the previous joins. Once the piece is assembled, you can go on to texture, polish, set stones, engrave, or anything else you can think up.

My favorites material is definitely metal, mostly silver. I love the scope smith-work provides. You can make practically anything you can imagine. The pieces are strong and durable. There are so many finishes you can apply. As far as favorite stones, anything

that is hard with good color. I like turquoise for its commercial appeal. I sometimes let the patterns within the stone dictate the design.

I do collect stones but only like a magpie. I like agates and have a bunch sitting in my window. Most of the stones I have lapped I have purchased from the club. That is where I learned to lap. The club has been a fantastic resource. I don't think I would be doing any of this without it.

I had wanted to do silversmithing for ages and Joe Wiring has been so generous with his time and expertise. It's great to have a teacher who not only has a command of the technical aspect but is also a fine jewelry artist --someone who has that kind of esthetic. I've also benefited from Danny Spurgeon's knowledge of copper enameling. The club allows people to have long exposure to the process of creating at a nominal cost. It's not just two weeks and you're on your own.

The most challenging aspect jewelry making is production and marketing. I'm bad at both. My time management is poor. I can get wrapped up in a single piece for days. I dislike repeating the same item even if it's a hot seller.

My inspiration comes chiefly from nature. I love organic forms, vintage and ancient jewelry. Right now my greatest inspiration comes from Steampunk/industrial. This movement has added much to the vocabulary of design. We seem to read meaning into machine components and this touches on the amulet/talisman concept which has been the basis of jewelry from the beginning. It is a break from the 20th century concept of geometric form without meaning.

I would advise anyone interested in jewelry-making to get as much education in the field as you can. No one was ever hampered by too much knowledge. Avoid following trends too closely. Don't copy, except as an educational exercise. Draw inspiration from what you love. If you like it, it will appeal to others as well. Practice every day. You wouldn't practice an instrument once a week and expect to perform in front of people. The visual arts are no different.

Hobbies: I enjoy anything hands-on: sewing, knitting, ceramic sculpture. I like reading --mostly non-fiction and classics. I still love science.

*In this new feature, we hope to showcase the talents of one member each month. If you would like to suggest a member, please e-mail [EIGGSnews@gmail.com](mailto:EIGGSnews@gmail.com)*



Silver cameo ring



Gold cast ring



Variscite & pearl pendant



Silver & copper steampunk bracelet



Turquoise & silver pendant



Silver & synthetic aquamarine poisoning ring

## UPCOMING SHOWS

**Oct. 24-25—EVANSVILLE, INDIANA:** Annual show; Evansville Lapidary Society, Washington Square Mall; 5011 Washington Ave; Sat. 10 a.m.-7 p.m., Sun. 12 p.m.-5 p.m.; Admission is free; Back to our original location- Washington Square Mall featuring 20+ dealers. Junior Rockhounds booth with spin and win game, raffles, hourly door prizes, silent auction, private collectors/exhibits, arrowheads and artifacts, demonstrations and club booth. Offering specimens, crystals, fossils, minerals, fine jewelry, beads, carvings, rough, geodes, faceted stones, tumbled stones, slabs, cabochons, rough and more; contact Sara Rappee, 413 North Park Dr., Evansville, IN 47710, (812) 589-3079; e-mail: sararappee@gmail.com; Web site: [www.evansvillelapidarysociety.tumblr.com](http://www.evansvillelapidarysociety.tumblr.com)

**Oct. 24-25—CUYAHOGA FALLS, OHIO:** Semi Annual Show; Akron Mineral Society & Summit Lapidary club, Emidio & Sons Expo Center; 48 Bath Road; Sat. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Admission: Adults \$5, Seniors (55+) & Students, \$4 Children (7-14) \$1, Children (6 and under) free. Ohio Fall Gemboree gem and mineral show. Displays of Ohio Flint and members' work, Geo Juniors displays, Dealers with geodes, minerals, jewelry, beads and findings, slab material, lapidary equipment, silver smith work, wire wrap, gold findings and more. Children's activities: make a gem tree, mine for minerals and stones in our gem mine, and take a look in to our kaleidoscope. Members demonstrate throughout the day: Gem ID, wire wrapping, gem trees; cutting and polishing stones and faceting; Silent auction and door prizes throughout the day and a children's treasure hunt. Free parking and wheel chair accessible. Show Chairman: Bob Powers Contact email: [Gemboree@outlook.com](mailto:Gemboree@outlook.com) ; contact Joyce Kish, 3014 Clarkmill Rd., Norton, OH 44203; e-mail: [gemboree@outlook.com](mailto:gemboree@outlook.com)

**23-25—MASON, MICHIGAN:** Annual show; Central Michigan Lapidary & Mineral Society, Main Arena, Ingham County Fair Grounds, Mason, MI.; 700 E. Ash St., ; Fri. 6-9 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Adults \$3, students \$1, children under 12 FREE with paying adult; Free parking, 12 dealers, club and guest displays, children's table, mineral identification kits, fluorescent mineral booth, hourly door prizes, mineral identification, Petoskey stone polishing, raffle, silent auction, spinning wheel, working demonstrators and more.; contact L. Roger Laylin, 1770 Sandhill Rd., Mason, MI 48854, (517) 349-3249; e-mail: [l.r.laylin@gmail.com](mailto:l.r.laylin@gmail.com); Web site: [michrocks.org](http://michrocks.org)

**Oct. 31-Nov. 1:—MIDLAND, MICHIGAN:** Annual show; Mid-Michigan Rock club, Great Hall; 5121 Bay City Road; Sat. 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Adults \$1, children 50¢; contact Dale Foster, 6113 Partridge Lane, Midland, MI 48640, (989) 513-7254; e-mail: [MMRCrockclub@yahoo.com](mailto:MMRCrockclub@yahoo.com)

**Nov. 17:—TROY, OHIO:** "Tucson of Troy" Jewelry, Mineral, & Rock Sale at Brukner Nature Center. Brukner Nature Center will be host for the annual jewelry, mineral and rock sale and fun night



(Tucson of Troy), sponsored by the Brukner Gem and Mineral Club on Tuesday Nov. 17 at 7 p.m. Local gem and mineral dealers will be selling handcrafted jewelry, rocks, and minerals at the Club's monthly meeting at Brukner Nature Center. Public is invited to view and purchase unique jewelry, minerals, rocks, and fossils. Besides the dealers selling their wares, there will be a silent auction and live rock auction. Persons attending are encouraged to bring at least one food item to be donated to the local food pantry.

**Nov. 20-22:—CRESTWOOD, KENTUCKY:** Annual show; KYANA Geological Society, Camp Crestwood; 7206 Clore Lane; Fri. 10 a.m.-7 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-7 p.m., Sun. Noon-5 p.m.; Free admission; Beautiful custom jewelry, jewelry supplies, beads, gemstones, crystals, minerals and fossils. Door prizes, children's activities, Free parking. ; contact Richard Hunter, 250 W. Triangle Lane, Louisville, KY 40229, (502) 298-8871; e-mail: [kyanashowchair@gmail.com](mailto:kyanashowchair@gmail.com); Web site: [www.kyanageo.org](http://www.kyanageo.org)

**Dec. 12-13:—FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE:** Annual show; Mid-Tennessee Gem & Mineral Society, Williamson County AgExpo Park; 4215 Long Lane; Sat. 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Admission \$4, students \$1, children are free!; Classes, speakers, exhibits, demonstrations, silent auction, hourly door prizes, grand prize, and OVER 30 DEALERS. Beads, crystals, geodes, lapidary & faceting rough, slabs, cabochons, gem stones, finished jewelry, Native American jewelry, tools, supplies, and mineral & fossil specimens. For information on classes, speakers, or location visit [www.MTGMS.org/show.htm](http://www.MTGMS.org/show.htm). (John Stanley, Show Chairman, [show@mtgms.org](mailto:show@mtgms.org); Dealer contact Steve Henegar, [show@mtgms.org](mailto:show@mtgms.org)) I-65 exit 61 (easy access from the interstate; 20 miles south of Nashville); contact John Stanley, 2828 Donna Hill Dr, Nashville, TN 37214, (615) 763-5704; e-mail: [show@MTGMS.org](mailto:show@MTGMS.org); Web site: [www.MTGMS.org/show.htm](http://www.MTGMS.org/show.htm)

**Feb. 19-21:—INDIANAPOLIS, IN:** GeoFest 14th Annual Indiana State Museum Fossil, Gem & Mineral Show. More information coming soon. Organized by: Indiana State Museum. Indiana State Museum (650 West Washington Street, Indianapolis)



## Brown County: Land of Scenic Hills, Ridges, and Valleys



**T**raveling to Brown County to see the fall foliage? While exploring, remember, the scenic hills of Brown County were carved from sedimentary rocks that formed about 345 to 355 million years ago when southern Indiana was covered by a shallow inland sea.

Sand, silt, and mud from highlands to the northeast were carried into this sea by ancient river systems and were deposited in a vast delta complex similar to that of today's Mississippi River.

These deposits later hardened into sandstones, siltstones, and shales that form the Borden Group. Later still, the sea stopped receiving large amounts of the sediment, and thick beds of lime-

stone were deposited over these rocks.

Following regional uplift, the rocks were exposed to weathering and erosion. Hundreds of feet of these ancient rocks were then stripped away by the streams of those times and the scenic hills and valleys of this area were eventually carved.

Where more resistant sandstones protected the underlying rocks, much more prominent hills like Weed Patch Hill, Hohen Point, and others were formed.

Ice age glaciers never actually reached all of Brown County, but evidence of them can be seen to the north and east of Brown County State Park.

# OPAL: OCTOBER'S BIRTHSTONE

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For many years, the opal has tried to shake off rumors and wives tales about the stone bringing bad luck. Perpetuated by folklore, mistaken identity, superstitions, family tales and disgruntled diamond traders, the opal has had a pretty tough life. As we entered the age of reason and science, this belief has somewhat fallen by the wayside, but a glimmer of the superstition still survives today.

The folklore connected with crystals, gems, and precious stones is as old as it is varied. Much of this tradition dates back to the beginnings of civilization, when jewelry was worn not only as adornment but also as protection against occult forces and human foolishness. Amethyst, for example, was thought to sober drunks, quell sexual passion, and cure baldness. Aquamarine was believed to protect seafarers, while emeralds increased fertility and intelligence, imparted prophetic ability, and other wild talents. Rubies provided defense against every kind of misfortune, made hostile neighbors friendly, and promoted one's stature in the community.

The opal's nasty reputation, however, has troubled folklorists for centuries. Fantastic legends have grown up around this stone, cautionary tales designed to discourage those who might otherwise find themselves attracted by its fiery brilliance. To this day, the odd prejudice against opals remains alive and well in some corners of the world, especially in southern Europe and the Middle East, where jewellers won't carry opals and customers won't buy them.

Throughout history, while many stones were prized for their positive magical qualities, others were denounced as vessels of evil. No gem was more vilified than the poor opal. Witches and sorcerers supposedly used black opals to increase their own magical powers or to focus them like laser beams on people they wanted to harm. Medieval Europeans dreaded the opal because of its resemblance to "the Evil Eye," and its superficial likeness to the optical organs of cats, toads, snakes, and other common creatures with hellish affiliations.

Opals completely contaminated with evil were believed capable of maiming or even killing a person foolish enough to wear or own it. Tales alleging to prove this are few in number, but the belief persists nevertheless, like those old but curiously tenacious admonitions about walking under ladders, stepping on a crack in the sidewalk, or allowing a black cat to dart across one's path. Popular superstitions such as these will be with us always, but however fanciful they may be, most have prosaic origins.

The Romans established opal as a precious gemstone, obtaining their supplies from traders in the Middle East. Opals from this era are thought to have come from Cernowitz, a mountainous region in what was at that time Hungary



Queen Elizabeth II received a gift of jewelry from the South Australian government during her post-coronation tour in 1953. The local government presented her with the finest opal ever discovered in the area, a 203 carat beauty known as the Andamooka opal named after the opal field. It is now known as the Queen's Opal.

, but now Slovakia. However, early Romans believed the source was India, an incorrect belief promoted by traders in order to protect their interests.

They believed the opal was a combination of the beauty of all precious stones, and it is well documented in Roman history that Caesars gave their wives opal for good luck. They ranked opal second only to emeralds, and carried opal as a good luck charm or talisman because it was believed that like the rainbow, opal brought its owner good fortune. In the days when Rome spread her legions across Europe and Africa, a Roman Senator by the name of Nonius opted for exile rather than sell his valuable opal to Marc Antony who wanted to give it to his famous lover Cleopatra.

In fact, in Roman times, the gem was carried as a good luck charm, as it was believed that the gem, like the rainbow, brought its owner good fortune. To the Romans, it was considered to be a token of hope and purity. It was also referred to as the "Cupid Stone" because it suggested the clear complexion of the god of love. The early Greeks believed the opal bestowed powers of foresight and prophecy upon its owner, while in Arabian folklore, it is said that the stone fell from heaven in flashes of lightning. The Oriental traditions referred to them as "the anchor of hope."

Early races credited opal with magical qualities and traditionally, opal was said to aid its wearer in seeing limitless possibilities. It was believed to clarify by amplifying and mirroring feelings, buried emotions and desires. It was also thought to lessen inhibitions and promote spontaneity.

In the 7th Century it was believed that opals possessed magical properties, and centuries later Shakespeare was attributed with the description of opal as "that miracle and queen of gems." Eastern peoples also dealt very heavily in this precious stone, which was believed to bring luck and to enhance psychic abilities.

However, the entire time the Hungarian mines supplied Europe with opal, including a stone for the crown of a Roman Emperor, superstitions circulated attributing evil powers and maladies to the colorful stone. In the 11th Century, Bishop Marbode of Rennes wrote of opal, "...Yet 'tis the guardian of the thievish

## Famous Opals

For more opal lore, research these

- Burning of Troy
- Hope Opal
- Fire Queen
- Harlequin Flam
- The Red Admiral
- The Black Prince
- The Empress of Australia
- The Flame Queen
- Olympic Australius



# OPAL LORE & LEGEND, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

race; It gifts the bearer with acutest sight; But clouds all other eyes with thickest night." This is thought to be based on the idea that opal granted its bearer with invisibility, therefore it was a talisman for thieves, spies and robbers!

Opals were also thought to have teleportation powers. A piece of opal jewelry might suddenly disappear from some obvious place, only to turn up weeks or months later somewhere unexpected. Of course, forgetfulness might also be to blame.

Fear and loathing of the opal did not discourage the development of a counter folklore which cast the stone as a symbol of hope, innocence, and purity. The Arabs of Mohammed's time were quite enamored of the gem, and were convinced they were carried to earth on bolts of lightning. European writers and poets of the Middle Ages also sang the opal's praises, claiming it had curative effect on bad eyes, protected children from predatory animals, banished evil, and made entertainments, friendships, and romances much more intense and enjoyable. Fair-haired girls in Germany and Scandinavia were encouraged to wear opal pins in their hair, as they were thought to add magical luster to their golden locks and protect them from freezing rain, wind, and other vicissitudes of the Nordic climate.

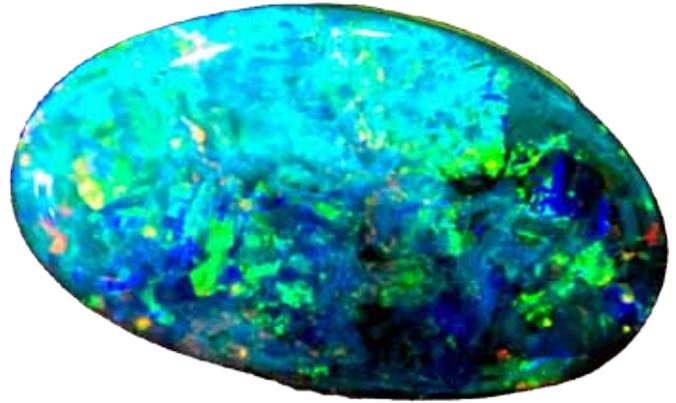
In the Middle Ages, the opal was known as the "eye stone" due to a belief that it was vital to good eyesight. Blonde women were known to wear necklaces of opal in order to protect their hair from losing its color. Some cultures thought the effect of the opal on sight could render the wearer invisible. Opals were set in the crown jewels of France, and Napoleon presented to his empress, Josephine, a magnificent red opal containing brilliant red flashes called "The Burning of Troy."

Medieval Europeans shunned opal because of its likeness to the eyes of several "evil" animals, such as cats. Fear of the Evil Eye, common to cultures the world over, was and remains especially acute in the Mediterranean. Simply defined, the term signifies a covetous or malicious glance meant to bring harm. Witches were thought to possess this awful power in great abundance, though common people with unrealized magical talents could also wield it, albeit unconsciously. The Eye did its stuff directly and indirectly. It could strike its intended victim sick or dead on the spot, or kill family members, blight crops, sicken livestock, or summon a storm with the muscle to level a house, a village, or an entire town.

The Evil Eye's association with the opal probably originated in Elizabethan England. There the stones were called "ophals," a shortening of the word ophthalmos, which referred to the human eye. The Evil Eye was accepted as fact in 16th Century Britain, as was belief in omens and auguries. In the minds of superstitious Elizabethans, the occult link between ophals and ophthalmos was both obvious and ominous.

Fear of the Eye crossed the Atlantic with European settlers. In Puritan New England, colonists wore heart-shaped pendants with prayers inside to protect themselves from the godless gaze of Satan's servants - witches, sorcerers, and magic workers who could be found in every forest clearing, every abandoned barn, and under every bed.

Ironically, they had it all wrong. The word opal had actually descended from the Roman "opalus," an ancestor of the modern opal that was thought to heal the blind and make a person invisible to his enemies. Opalus was among the most virtuous of stones. To the Romans, who in their own way were even more



■ The "Aurora Australis" was found in 1938 at Lightning Ridge and is considered the world's most valuable black opal. The oval, cut and polished stone has a harlequin pattern with dominant red, green and blue colors against a black background. It weighs 180 cts. and is 3 inches by 1.8 inches. The rarity of the opal comes from its size and strong, vibrant color play. It was valued at AUD \$1,000,000 in 2005.

superstitious than the Elizabethans, it was certainly no kin to the Evil Eye.

During the late 18th and 19th centuries opal fell out of favour, as it was associated with pestilence, famine and the fall of monarchies. Opal was also tied to the Black Plague, an affliction that struck in the middle of the 14th Century, ultimately eradicating more than a third of Europe's population and much more in neighboring territories. During the decimation of Europe by the Black Death, it was rumored that an opal worn by a patient was aflame with color right up to the point of death, and then lost its brilliance after the wearer died. As the plague put Europe under siege, desperate people searched for a scapegoat, and the opal served that purpose.

Queen Victoria, however, did much to reverse the unfounded bad press. Queen Victoria became a lover of opal, kept a fine personal collection, and wore opals throughout her reign.

"The year 1348, an astrological Martial sub-cycle, saw Venice assailed by destructive earthquakes, tidal waves and the Plague," wrote Isidore Kozminsky in *The Magic and Science of Jewels and Stones*. "The epidemic in a few months carried off two-thirds of the population of the city sparing neither rich nor poor, young nor old. It is said that at this time the opal was a favorite gem with Italian jewelers, being much used in their work. It is further said that opals worn by those stricken became suddenly brilliant and that the luster entirely departed with the death of the wearer. Story further tells that the opal then became an object of dread and was associated with the death of the victim."

Many centuries later, a Spanish king would sully the opal's already sordid reputation further still. In the late 19th Century, Alfonso XII fell madly in love with a beautiful aristocrat named the Comtesse de Castiglione. The Comtesse reciprocated the King's affection, but months before the pair were to wed the faithless Alfonso married another woman, the Princess Mercedes. Vowing to get even, the Comtesse sent the couple a wedding present in the form of a magnificent opal set in a huge ring of the purest gold. The princess was immediately smitten by the gift and insisted that her husband slip it on her finger. He obliged, and two months later the princess mysteriously died.

After the funeral Alfonso gave the ring to his grandmother, Queen Christina,



# OPAL LORE & LEGEND, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

who almost immediately thereafter also expired. After that the ring passed to Alfonso's sister, the Infanta Maria del Pilar. Maria died as well, apparently victim to the same weird illness that had taken the other two women. The ring was up for grabs yet again, and when Alfonso's sister-in-law expressed an interest, he let her have it with the usual result.

Deeply depressed by then, the King decided to end it all by slipping the ring on his own finger, just as Cleopatra had embraced the asp to terminate her own misery. In little over a month, the ring did to Alfonso what the snake had done to the Egyptian Queen. The ring was finally attached to a gold chain and strung around the neck of a statue of the patron saint of Madrid, the Virgin of Aludena. That put an end to the incredible chain of tragic circumstances, but was the gem really responsible for the calamities besetting this royal family? According to Kozminsky, it seems pretty unlikely.

"At this time it must be remembered that cholera was raging through Spain," he writes in *The Magic and Science of Jewels and Stones*. "Over 100,000 people died of it during the summer and autumn of 1885. It attacked all classes from the palace of the king to the hut of the peasant, some accounts giving the death estimate at 50% of the population. It would be as obviously ridiculous to hold the opal responsible for this scourge as it was to do so in the previously noted plague at Venice. All that may be said is that in this case the opal was not a talisman of good for King Alfonso XII of Spain and to those who received it from his hand, and that in the philosophy of sympathetic attraction and repulsion man, stones, metals and all natural objects come under the same law."

The saddest opal saga is the oft-repeated misconception in the last of Sir Walter Scott's novels, *Anne of Geierstein* (1829), which irrevocably linked opal to misfortune. Having not read the third volume, the public jumped to the conclusion that the heroine has been bewitched, that her magic opal discolors when touched by holy water, and that she dies as a result. On carefully examining the texts, Si Frazier, writing in *Lapidary Journal*, found all three accusations false. The opal, which actually belonged to Anne's exotic grandmother, turns out to have turned pale as a warning to its owner against poisoning (which was the actual cause of her grandmother's death). Even so, this single work plunged opal prices to half in just one year and crippled the European opal market for decades.

George F. Kunz, author of *The Curious Lore of Precious Stones*, says, "There can be little doubt that much of the modern superstition regarding the supposed unlucky quality of the opal owes its origin to a careless reading of Sir Walter Scott's novel, 'Anne of Geierstein'. The wonderful tale... contains nothing to indicate that Scott really meant to represent opal as unlucky."

Another contributing factor to opal's bad reputation may be the fact that opals are a relatively fragile gemstone. Opals are a soft gemstone compared to diamonds, and can be broken if mistreated or treated roughly. This may have contributed to an overall perception of opal as "bad luck", since anybody would be heartbroken to lose a precious beautiful opal or family heirloom.

"A possible explanation of the superstitious dread that opal used to excite some time ago may be found in the fact that lapidaries and gem-setters to whom opals were entrusted were sometimes so unfortunate as to fracture them in the process of cutting or setting," wrote George Frederick Kunz in *The Curious Lore of Precious Stones*.



■ "Halley's Comet," is recorded in the Guinness Book of Records as the world's largest uncut black opal nobby. The massive stone was found by a group of opal miners on the Leaning Tree Claim at Lightning Ridge known as "The Lunatic Hill Syndicate" about the time "Halley's Comet" appeared in Australian skies.

"This was frequently due to no fault on the part of the cutters or setters, but was owing to the natural brittleness of the opal. As such workmen are responsible to the owners for any injury to the gems, they would soon acquire a prejudice against opals, and would come to regard them as unlucky stones. Very widespread superstitions have no more foundation than this, for the original cause, sometimes quite a rational one, is soon lost sight of and popular fantasy suggests something entirely different and better calculated to appeal to the imagination."

One royal opal did bring terrible misfortune to the hapless goldsmith who broke it during setting. The unforgiving Louis XI ordered his hands cut off! It's no surprise that few of his colleagues thereafter had anything good to tell buyers about opal, therefore some blame opal's maligned reputation on the difficulty that lapidaries had with cutting and setting them.

Some maintain that diamond merchants of the mid 19th and early 20th centuries saw the amazing attributes of opal and realized it was going to be a serious threat to their livelihood. When high quality Australian opal appeared on the market in the 1890s, it is understood that diamond cartels actively spread the false rumor that opal was unlucky and seriously damaged the reputation of opals.

Opal, with its stunning play of color, was increasing in popularity and could represent a threat to the lucrative diamond trade now that it was being mined commercially. The story goes that jealous diamond traders spread the belief that opals are bad luck to protect themselves and give opals a bad reputation. Some of the rumors stuck and became the 'old wives' tales which are still repeated today.

Isidore Kozminsky in the 1922 edition of his book *The Magic and Science of Jewels and Stones* states that "perhaps against no other gem has the bigotry of superstitious ignorance so prevailed as against the wonderful opal."

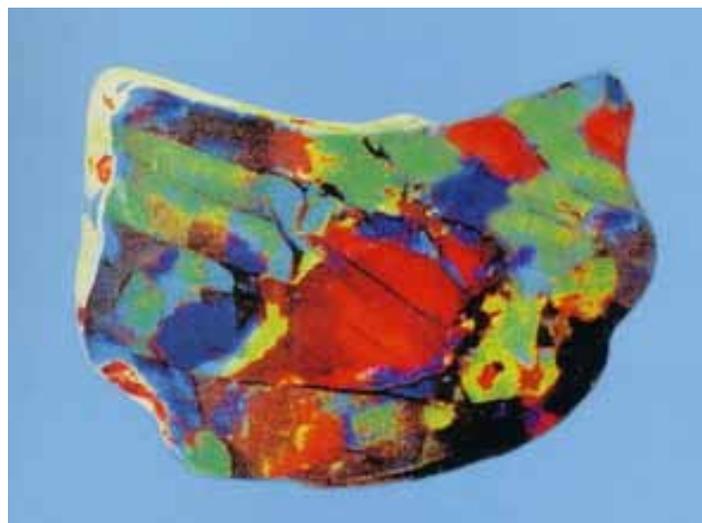
He also cites several historical references to the talismanic qualities of opal



including the story of a French baron who resided in London, who owned an opal that had been in the family since the 12th Century. In 1908 he took the opal to the London Pavilion where a soothsayer told him that the opal would bring him good fortune and that he was about to inherit £500,000! The London newspaper *Evening News* reported that within a few days the soothsayers' prediction had come true; it also stated that the ancient opal had a faint inscription in old Spanish, which translated to the words "Good Luck."

Another anecdote tells the tale of a rich city financier who took his 'opal ring' to a jeweller: he wanted to sell it because of the ill luck it had brought him. A tale of misfortune was recounted. As a result of wearing the ring, his wife had fallen ill, a condition that also affected his son, and he encountered among many other troubles financial difficulties and ill health. The jeweller, however, merely smiled and showed him that the stone in the ring was not an opal but a moonstone. Only his imagination had endowed the opal ring with such unpleasant properties.

There are many reports of opal bringing people luck, including the many opal miners who have made their fortunes and have lived long and prosperous lives. A well known piece of history comes from the Lightning Ridge Historical Society. Mick McCormack, a young opal miner at Lightning Ridge, rode off on his bike when war was declared and went to enlist, simply saying to his friends "I'll be back." A lifetime went by and a very old man was in the Lightning Ridge Hotel showing a piece of opal that he had mined and carried with him through the Great War. At the time he was showing it a buyer offered him 1,500 pounds Australian for the stone. The old man said, "1,500 quid? Not on your life, mate - I wouldn't accept fifteen thousand quid. I carried this opal through the war with me and I remember one time when I thought it was my last day on earth. Men were killed all around me. Night time, it was, and there was the flashes of the guns and the shells bursting all around us. My hair was standing up and I was sweating. I was really frightened. I had the opal in my tunic pocket. I took it out and looked at it and something . . . sort of . . . calmed me down. I looked at the opal in my hand and I thought, 'Some day, I've got to go back to the Ridge. And I'll get back! And I'll take this stone back to where it came from. No mate, money can't buy this stone.'" A couple of old miners finally realized who this old



■ Shaped like the Australian continent, the Pride of Australia, also known as Red Emperor, was found in 1915. The 2" x 3" opal has black and blue veins interlaced with brilliant red streaks. By 1954, it had toured at least five World Fairs as "the greatest opal of Australia, and therefore the greatest opal in the world."

man was. They had grown up with him as kids and it was their old mate Mick who had been true to his word and had finally brought his stone home.

Despite all of this and more, the bad rap against opals has stuck through the ages. This can be partially explained by human nature. For most people, a bad opal will always have more appeal than a good one, a cursed opal more fascination than an opal that brings good luck, wards off wicked influences, or cures. We humans love a mystery, and the darker the mystery, the better we like it.

Sources :

"Opals", by Fred Ward, Gem Book Publishers, 1997.

"Australian Precious Opal", Andrew Cody, 1991.

"Fatal Attraction", by D. Douglas Graham, Colored Stone magazine, September / October 2001.

## Now It's Your Turn

This is YOUR newsletter and we want to hear from you! Please take a minute and answer at least one of the following questions. E-mail your answers to [ELGGSnews@gmail.com](mailto:ELGGSnews@gmail.com) or mail them to ELGGS Newsletter, PO Box 1724, Richmond, IN 47375. Your answers will be featured in upcoming issues. Thanks!

1. How, when, and where did you develop an interest in rocks, gems and geology?

2. Do you collect rocks, minerals, gems or fossils? How long have you been collecting? Do you specialize in any particular category? If so, what draws you to these items?

3. Do you have one favorite stone in your collection (gem, mineral, fossil, etc.), and if so, why is that your favorite?

4. Have you gone on any trips to collect rocks? If so, where have you gone and what have you found?

5. Which ELGGS members would like to see featured in upcoming newsletters? Please explain why they should be featured.

6. Would you like to write a short article for the newsletter? If so, please submit your topic and a general overview of what you would like to write.