“CUTTING REMARKS”
The Official Publication of the Old Pueblo Lapidary Club
520-323-9154

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Please join us September 13th at 9:00am for the monthly meeting. There is an optional social hour that begins at 8:00am, followed by an educational program at 9:00am, followed by the monthly meeting. Visitors are always welcome.

Articles or news to be included in the Cutting Remarks should be emailed to your Editor, Mike DeMeritt (silverlininggemstones@gmail.com), or feel free to call him at 520-203-8430. Submission deadline is the 20th of each month. Thanks!

See us online at: www.lapidaryclub.org
We had a decent monsoon this year! Our roof work and sealing job on the meeting building seems to be holding up, and with the workshops being open more often, they are not as crowded. However, that will likely change when northern members return this fall. Our new monitors will be ready! I am looking forward to seeing some old friends - especially those who come with renewed enthusiasm and new ideas.

Keep bringing the aluminum cans - the last trip to the recycle place netted the club $100.00! Information and rules regarding our October 11th Tailgate Sale are in this newsletter, so be sure to take note. Danny Harmsen will have some great items for our raffle table at the next meeting. So, be sure to wear your OPLC nametag and get a free raffle ticket with the purchase of one or more! I will see you at the September 13, 2014 meeting for refreshments, program, and business meeting.

-John

**OCTOBER TAILGATE SALE**

- Tailgate Sale - WILL NOT START UNTIL AFTER THE MEETING!
  - OPLC Members Only!
- Items for sale - MUST be related to the lapidary or metalsmithing arts, or OPLC activities!
- Parking for Participants - North Lot, FROM 8:00 AM - 8:30 AM ONLY!
- The North Parking Lot WILL be open to monitors working that day!
  - After 8:30 am, the North Parking Lot will then be open to the General Membership

Again, the Tailgate Sale WILL NOT START until after the meeting is over!

*Front Cover Pictures:* Stunning blue **star sapphire**, this month’s birthstone. This **azurite**, likely from the Lavender Pit mine in Bisbee, looks a blue version of malachite, and will cut beautiful cabs!
Minutes August 9, 2014 OPLC meeting.

Program presenter was Jim Turner, Arizona historian.

After program, President John Poole brought the meeting to order at 9:16 AM after checking if quorum was present.

No additions or corrections to meeting minutes.

Refreshments: Thank you to Margaret Schreifels. Norma Lackow has volunteers to bring refreshments for the remainder of this year.

Guests: 2  New members: 7

Treasurer report Mark Gibson: all is fine and at 38% of budget

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Mike DeMeritt: will order supplies for the lapidary lab.

2. Silent auction: lacking tools, John Poole asked for donations of tools that club members have and are not using.

3. 2 new monitors are in place: Jerry Glazman and Giac D’Aquisto

4. Tail gate sale event after October meeting will be for members only.

5. Field trips planned: Moab, UT trip, still in the works. Jean Barkley will be putting together a trip to Round Mountain, and Mike DeMeritt is planning a trip to Cave Creek area in either September or October – onyx, agate, and jasper.

6. Shiel Powell asked for volunteers to break up larger rocks located at the club for the school children.

7. John Poole discussed the suggestion from the suggestion box regarding hiring people to teach classes. The Board had decided that with all of the fabulous talent among our Club members there is no need to pay other teachers.

8. The north gate has been relocated to relieve parking problems.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Chuck Lundstrom expressed that the A/C in the casting room is marginally working.

2. Kim Filips thanked everyone for cleaning the lab aprons, and asked the question regarding where will the tail gate sales people park? After much discussion, JP said this would be brought up for discussion at the next board meeting.

Door prize won by Bill Patton

Meeting adjourned at 10:43 AM
Tony Jones has been a full time mineral and fossil wholesaler since 1973. He travelled extensively throughout South America, Mexico, Europe, Morocco, and China in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s. From his trips he brought many remarkable specimens for museums and private collectors.

The topic of his program will be his mineral collecting travels to South America namely to, Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela and Chile, and to Guerrero, Mexico. Mr. Jones will show some of his specimens via a visual presentation. This will include some fine amethyst specimens from Guerrero, Mexico. You can see some of the actual specimens of amethyst and of gold from his Guerrero trip at the University of Arizona Mineral Museum.

Here are some highlights of his extensive career in minerals.

Born in Los Angeles, Tony's mineral collecting began as a result of geology courses at Hondo Junior College. He went on class field trips and began spending weekends on his own collecting minerals all over California, Arizona and New Mexico. In 1971, while still in school, he began making extra money by selling minerals. He attended Cal State Los Angeles, receiving his Bachelor's Degree in Geology in 1973. Tony also attended graduate school at Cal State LA (working as a Teaching Assistant in Paleontology) and Cal State Northridge. After college he worked as a laboratory technician for Interpace Corporation Research Center in Glendale, California. 1974 he decided to become a full-time mineral dealer, under the name of "California Rock and Mineral Company".

In 1980 Tony and a partner leased a variscite mine in Nevada and collected several tons of what turned out to be gem chalcosiderite. In November of 1980, an unprecedented strike of pink octahedral fluorite took place at the Huanzala mine, Peru. Tony and Curt Van Scriver, were touring Ecuador and Peru at the time, and purchased wonderful specimens, and one of Tony's appeared on the cover of the May-June 1981 Mineralogical Record.

In 1981 Tony began traveling to Europe and Morocco, where he picked up many specimens from old localities and arranged exchanges with museums in Germany and France. These included erythrites and some very fine Moroccan specimens of azurite and malachite pseudomorph. Tony traveled to Papua, New Guinea for gold crystals in 1989 and to Venezuela for gold crystals and diamonds, scoring some incredible crystals which were sold to a private collector.

Tony lived near Brea, CA, where he had a shop from 1983-1988. He lived in Fallbrook, California from 1988 to 1993.

In 1992 Tony visited the amethyst district in Guerrero, Mexico and purchased one of the largest and best lots of Ametitlan amethyst ever to come out--600 to 700 specimens, including beautiful, perfect, deep purple clusters up to 18 inches tall.

In 1993 He moved to Royal, Arkansas, where he lived until 2001. Meanwhile he made more buying trips to Peru and Bolivia, where he acquired some of the finest vivianites and ludlamites ever found. He also imported literally a ton of "ametrine" (amethyst and citrine) crystals from Bolivia. While in Arkansas he traveled to China and spent six weeks there, purchasing some great stibnites for the time, as well as scheelites and cassiterites and other assorted minerals.

Over the years Mr. Jones has been a frequent wholesaler at the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show and is very well known in the trade. He currently resides in Green Valley, AZ and is still involved in sharing his interest and passion for minerals.
WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Katie Anne          Jerry Pulley
Victor Beer        Lynn Pulley
Robert Dennison    Shirley Requard
Irene Dobias       Steven Richards
Edna Fiedler       Olga Rodriguez
Justin Herrick     Walter Snipes
Mark Holbert       Jim Turner
Chris Holbert      Monica Williams
Molly O’Meara

Wow! Another big month for New Members! The bigger our club gets, the better we will be able to serve our membership, as more people means more experience, more volunteers, and better funding for our many projects. Don’t forget in your daily travels to advocate for the club and bring in those new members - and let's get more people involved in our exciting hobby!

DONATIONS

Jim Kuderna: Facetron Faceting Machine with accessories, alcohol lamp
Al Romey:    2 Belt Sanders, bench vice, 3/8” Drill, Hot Air Gun, Drill Press for hand tools, 7 Rock-related Books

To donate to OPLC, just see or contact Dan Harmsen. at 721-8452.
Astorite - a rare pink gem with historic mining roots

By Helen Serras-Herman, MFA, FGA

Astorite is a rare rock composed mostly of pink rhodonite along with various amounts of quartz, rhodochrosite, gold, silver and other minerals. It is mined only at the historic Toltec gold mine in the San Juan Mountains of Southwestern Colorado, about 10 miles from Silverton, an area that became famous for its silver and gold mining at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century.

Silverton & the San Juan Mountains

The San Juan mountain range is part of Southern Colorado’s Rocky Mountains.

Surrounded by great natural beauty, the town of Silverton is today a National Historic Landmark where many of its original buildings are still standing. Gold was discovered there in 1860 and after negotiations with the Ute Indians the town was created in 1874, doubling in population within a year. Silverton is located in San Juan County at 9,318 feet elevation, and the mine is situated at a very remote area above 10,000 feet. Driving on the Million Dollar Highway that connects the historic mining areas of Silverton and Ouray, the traveler is rewarded with breath-taking scenery of deep gorges, mountain lakes and landscapes packed with evergreen trees.

John Jacob Astor IV

The Toltec mine was originally owned by Colonel John Jacob Astor IV, one of the wealthiest men in early 20th century America, who owned several gold and silver mines in the Silverton mining district. Astorite is the trade name given to this material to honor its original mine owner.

John Jacob Astor IV, born in 1864, was an American business man, inventor and writer. He was a member of the prominent Astor family. He served as lieutenant colonel during the Spanish-American War of 1898. His 1894 science fiction "A Journey in Other Worlds: A Romance of the Future" was a success. Astor was a real-estate magnate, and became famous for building in New York City in 1897 the luxurious 17-story Astoria Hotel adjoining the 13-story Waldorf Hotel, which was owned by his cousin William Waldorf Astor. The combined historic landmark properties known as the Waldorf-Astoria became a prestigious destination for traveling visitors.

After his first marriage ended in divorce in 1909, as scandalous as it was considered back then, at the age of 47 he married 18-year old Madeleine Talmage Force. The couple went on a long honeymoon in Europe and Egypt, and because Madeleine became pregnant, they were returning home aboard the RMS Titanic on that fateful maiden voyage in 1912. Astor and his new bride were the wealthiest people on board. Just before the ship sunk, Astor helped his wife, her maid and her nurse get into a lifeboat, but he was not allowed to embark. He died tragically when the ship sank.
This heartbreaking story of love and tragedy has added another layer of history, lore and mystique to Astorite.

After Astor’s death, the portal of the mine was sealed by dynamiting the entrance, not to be re-opened until 2001, when the first new owner Will Benham - an enthusiastic rockhound - acquired the patented mining claims through a bid into the United Bank of Denver. According to another speculation, the entrance to the mine was shut by Astor himself, wanting to save it for future exploration.

The mine claim later changed hands and is owned since 2003 by Keith and Connie McFarland of K&C Traders in Silverton, CO (Brendan Laurs, Gems & Gemology Summer 2007).

Astorite composition & properties

My husband and I first purchased some rough material in 2002 from Will Benham, and I am thankful that he provided us with the mineral data.

Based on its composition Astorite is a somewhat familiar and somewhat mystical gem material. What makes the rhodonite-rich Astorite an exceptional material is the addition of three more major components - rhodochrosite, quartz in the form of pseudomorphs and chalcedony, and ore gangue, which is highly silicified, complex sulfide with native metallic elements of gold, silver, copper, lead, chalcopyrite and magnetite, as well as galena, tenninite and tetrahedrite. The term "ore gangue" refers to material that surrounds or is mixed together with a main mineral or ore deposit.

Many mineral skeptics still argue that the material is simply rhodonite, but Raman spectroscopy performed on two cabochons at the GIA lab in Carlsbad, California, proved that the rock is composed of rhodonite, quartz, rhodochrosite and other minerals. It also showed that the black spots match chalcocite, galena, pyrite and sphalerite (Brendan Laurs, Gems & Gemology Summer 2007), unlike black manganese veins that run through rhodonite (J.R. Yakabowski, "Astorite- A distinctive new gem material", Wire Artist Jeweller, Vol. 6, No 6, 2003).

There are also some rare mineral inclusions of helvite, rose red crystals of friedelite, and transparent colorless fluorite and calcite. The amount of these minor minerals varies in each piece of rough and consequently in the cut slabs. The rock is not considered gold or silver ore, although it does assay at about 0.1 oz of gold and 7.75 ounces of silver per ton. The material is highly fluorescent under both SW and LW UV light.

All these additional mineral inclusions make Astorite a unique lapidary material with an attractive color combination of soft pink, grey, black veins and tan spots, with beautiful translucent lacy and fortification patterns, or plumes of white chalcedony. Pink gemstones have a love-hate audience, and sometimes it is difficult to sell pink gemstone jewelry, then again, the delicate, pastel pink color with gold and silver flecks, makes Astorite gemstones beautiful, distinctive, eye-catching, and desired treasures for collectors.
The hardness of Astorite is around 6.5-7 on the Mohs scale, depending on the amount of chalcedony quartz present. It is easy to cut into cabs and free-forms and takes an exceptional polish. The addition of chalcedony veins brings the hardness of this lapidary material up, facilitating a better and higher polish. Thin slabs retain good sectional integrity.

One-of-a-kind cabs and jewellery

My husband and I, first visited the historic towns of Ouray and Silverton in 1994, but at the time we were not familiar with Astorite. However, we recognized the beauty of the material and that the layers of history and lore behind it would make Astorite a desirable gemstone. Since then we have cut most of our rough and sold slabs and one-of-a-kind cabs. Astorite lends itself beautifully to carving, and I have created some lovely pieces incorporating them into my jewellery artwork.

At present, rough material and slabs of Astorite are seldom sold, and are considered very rare. Large slabs of Astorite that display a good balance combination of soft pink color, black veins, striking lacy patterns of white chalcedony, and ‘wires’ or tendrils of gold and silver, are considered extremely rare in the market today.

A unique gem, astorite is certainly one worth adding to your collection.

Additional References

Mindat.org website at http://mindat.org/min-32145.html

‘Astorite’, very short article by this author, The Dopstick, GLMS-DC, June 2003

(with information provided by this author)
About the author

**Helen Serras-Herman** is an acclaimed gem sculptor with over 30 years of experience in unique gem sculpture and jewellery art. A 2003 *National Lapidary Hall of Fame* inductee, Helen’s award-winning work has been exhibited worldwide and published in over 140 trade magazine articles and books.

Visit her website at [www.gemartcenter.com](http://www.gemartcenter.com)

Photo descriptions

All photos by Helen Serras-Herman (except #3, #5 and #9)

**Astorite slabs**

Astorite is a rare rock composed mostly of rhodonite, along with various amounts of chalcedony quartz, rhodochrosite, gold, silver, copper, chalcopyrite, galena, pyrite and sphalerite.

**Astorite slab**

Large slabs of Astorite that display a good balance combination of soft pink color, black veins, striking lacy patterns of white chalcedony, and ‘wires’ or tendrils of gold and silver, are considered extremely rare in the market today. 6” W x 5” H

**Astorite necklace by HSH (Photo by Michael Colella)**

Astorite lends itself beautifully to carving and jewellery artwork. This ‘Astorite Necklace’ created by the author, is featured in Renée Newman’s book *Rare Gemstones*.

**Astorite cabs**

Astorite is easy to cut into cabs and free-forms and takes an exceptional polish.

**John Jacob Astor IV (Photo: Wikipedia Commons, public domain photo)**

John Jacob Astor IV, owner of the Toltec mine that produced the Astorite, was with his new bride, 18-year old Madeleine, on the RMS Titanic on that fateful maiden voyage in 1912.

**Astorite inclusions**

The rare mineral inclusions and the layers of history and lore behind Astorite make it a unique lapidary material and a desirable gemstone.

**The ‘love birds’**

The black inclusions in Astorite match chalcopyrite, galena, pyrite and sphalerite. Beautiful stone images of two ‘love birds’ appeared when we consecutively-cut these slabs.

**Astorite, rhodonite & rhodochrosite**

Raman spectroscopy proved that Astorite is composed of rhodonite, quartz, rhodochrosite and other minerals. The difference between astorite (lower left), gem rhodonite from Australia (lower right), and gemmy rhodochrosite from Argentina (upper row) is evident.

**Astorite Tempest (Photo by Michael Colella)**

The colors of Astorite complement many other materials, like these shells in this ‘Astorite Tempest’ necklace by the author, now in private collection.
OPLC members and guests enjoyed a wonderful presentation by Jim Turner, historian, at our monthly meeting August 9, 2014. Jim's presentation of interesting facts about our great state of Arizona had many beautiful photographs that you can enjoy again via his website at www.jimturnerhistorian.org or you may purchase his well illustrated book, 'Arizona, A Celebration of the Grand Canyon State'. Just give him a call at (520) 576-8678, or e-mail jimturnerhistorian@gmail.com if you are interested in learning more about Arizona.
Sapphire is the gemstone for September, and the common name for gem-grade Corundum (technically, Ruby is another name for gem-grade corundum, but only for those rare red crystals with chromium as the chromofore, or coloring agent...) Corundum is an oxide of Aluminum that occurs as trigonal crystals (typically barrel-shaped with several steep hexagonal bipyramids, tabular bipyramids, usually lamellar, and sometimes granular). It has vitreous luster and is translucent to transparent. It has no cleavage, a Moh’s hardness of approximately 9.0, and a density of approximately 4.0. Color is usually grey, weakly blue, yellow, or red, but all colors can occur. Normally pure Al2O3, the color-giving ions, such as Cr (ruby) or Fe and Ti (sapphire), are present only in very small amounts - typically only a few parts per million!

Crystal structure can be described as an almost-hexagonal close packing of spheres of O atoms in which two-thirds of the octahedrally-coordinated interstices are occupied by Al and the remaining third are empty. Corundum occurs in silicon-poor igneous rocks such as syenites and nepheline-syenites and associated pegmatites, in contact zones between peridotites and surrounding rocks, and in metamorphic rocks such as gneisses, mica-schists, and crystalline limestones. Because of its hardness and chemical resistance, it is also widespread in sand and gravel deposits.

Sapphire is found all over the globe - important deposits occur in Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Tanzania, Madagascar, and Queensland, Australia, among others. We have gem occurrences in the United States in North Carolina and Montana. The most famous sapphire deposits, though long mined-out, occurred at high altitude at Padar in Kashmir, India, where marble and other metamorphic rocks are cut by pegmatitic dykes. New sources are found often, especially in Africa, but a very recent find in Ceylon, Sri Lanka, shows amazing promise with deep-blue transparent crystals that can weigh over 20 grams! Sapphire is fairly easy to cut and polish, though beginners sometimes have trouble with pre-polish. Try using a 3,000-grit diamond lap, works every time for me... You will probably never cut another stone with such sharp facet breaks (unless you are a diamond bril- lianteer!) You will go through laps/saws more quickly, thanks to corundum’s incredible hardness. But after factoring in corundum’s high refractive index (1.76), decent dispersion, and amazing variety of colors, you’ll come to understand why this species is truly “king of the colored gems”!

Compiled/written by Mike DeMeritt, 2012
Don’t forget about the new OPLC shirts and ballcaps! Some sizes are going quickly, so get yours now! They also make great stocking stuffers! Long-Sleeved shirts are $15, while t-shirts and ballcaps are $12 each. Get ’em while they last!
MONEY SAVING DISCOUNTS

- **DAH Rock Shop** - 10% on most items, $10 minimum purchase.  520-323-0781
  3401 Dodge Blvd, Tucson

- **Colorwright** - 520-623-3874 Web address: [http://www.color-wright.com/](http://www.color-wright.com/), **MAILING ADDRESS:** 1520 S Desert Crest Dr., Tucson, AZ 85713. Amount of discount depends on item(s) being purchased.

- **Jay's of Tucson** - 30% discount excluding orange tag items, sterling silver sheet and wire.
  520-323-1123 (corner of Speedway & Swan)
  4627 E Speedway, Tucson

- **Jed's Rock Shop** - 20% on all items.  520-882-6044 - 6275 N Sandario Rd, Tucson

- **Copper City Rock Shop** - See ad in this issue. 10% discount with ad. 928-425-7885
  566 Ash, Globe, AZ 85501

- **Kent’s Tools** - 10% discount.  520-624-8098 - 133 E Grant Road, Tucson

- **Tucson Mineral & Gem World** - 10%  520-883-0682 Web address: www.tucsonmineral.com
  2801 South Kinney Road, Tucson

- **Arizona Lapidary** - 10% discount for OPLC members. See ad in this issue. 520-399-6641 - 4699 E Pima St, Tucson

- **Silver Lining Gemstones** - 20-35% discount on most items. 520-203-8430, or see Mike De-Meritt at any of his labs. Includes eBay Store at [www.stores.ebay.com/high-lonesome-turquoise](http://www.stores.ebay.com/high-lonesome-turquoise).

DON’T FORGET

Please don’t forget to continue to bring in **YOUR** (or anyone else’s for that matter) aluminum cans to the Club for recycling. Your contribution would be greatly appreciated to help add $’s to the Club’s treasury. **Thanks!**

Rate Schedule for Advertisements

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<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Ad Sizes &amp; Prices</th>
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| Full page - 9 1/2" H by 7 1/4" W | $168.00 per year  
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LIBRARIAN
Twink Monrad 297-9454

MEMBERSHIP
Wayne Klement 954-6298

SECURITY
John Poole 777-5588

SILENT AUCTION
Dan Harmsen 721-8452
# WEEKLY WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

**Phone 323-9154**

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<th><strong>Mondays</strong></th>
<th><strong>Thursdays</strong></th>
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| 9AM - 12PM  **Cabbing**  
Monitor - Gloria Jean Dana | 9AM - 12PM  **Cabbing**  
Monitor - Bob Powell 403-8980 |
| 1PM - 4PM  **Faceting Guild**  
Monitor - Billy Bob Riley 225-9060 | 10AM - 1PM  **Rock Sawing**  
Monitor - Pete Peterson 886-9021 |
| 1PM - 4PM  **Silversmith Lab**  
Monitor - Lou Akerman 290-6968 | |
| 5PM - 9PM  **Cabbing**  
Monitor - Joseph Blackcoyote 891-6822 | |
| 6PM - 9PM  **Beginning Faceting**  
Monitor - Earl Zoeller 886-3518 | |

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<tr>
<th><strong>Tuesdays</strong></th>
<th><strong>Fridays</strong></th>
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| 9AM - Noon  **Cabbing***  
Monitor - Mike DeMeritt 203-8430 | 9AM - 12PM  **Cabbing***  
Monitor - Mike DeMeritt 203-8430 |
| 9AM - Noon  **Silversmithing Lab**  
Monitor - John Poole 777-5588 | |
| 1PM - 4PM  **Beginning Faceting**  
Monitor - Mike DeMeritt 203-8430 | 10AM - 3PM  **Rock Sawing**  
Monitor - Jim Griffin |
| 1 PM - 4PM  **Cabbing**  
Monitor - Jerry Glazman 860-689-3432 | 10AM - 3PM  **Silversmithing**  
Monitor - Terry Cox 296-4949 |

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<th><strong>Wednesdays</strong></th>
<th><strong>Saturdays</strong></th>
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| 6PM - 9PM  **Beginning Casting**  
Monitor - Chuck Lundstrom 241-9262 | 8AM - 12PM  **Rock Sawing**  
Monitor - Ron Davidson 400-2125 |
| 6PM - 9PM  **Cabbing**  
Monitor - Keith Haubert 784-8283 | |
| 6PM - 9PM  **Silversmithing Lab**  
Monitor - Bill Penrose 544-7517 | 10AM - 3PM  **Cabbing***  
Monitor - Giac D’Aquisto 207-6219 |
| 6 PM - 9PM  **Faceting**  
Monitor - Billy Bob Riley 225-9060 | |

*SPECIAL NOTICE:

- *INSTRUCTION PROVIDED AS AVAILABLE, MAY REQUIRE DOUBLE-PUNCHED HOURS*
OPLC Membership Application - Please Print

Name1 __________________________ Name 2 ___________________________ Date __________________

Local Address ________________________________________________________________________________

City ____________________       State  ____  Zip Code  ____________  Phone number   (_____) ______________

Email address   ____________________________________   Summer Dates: From__________  To ____________

Summer Address __________________________________________________________________________

City  _______________________________        State  _______________  Zip Code  _________________________

Type of membership: 1st Quarter  2nd Quarter  3rd Quarter  4th Quarter  Annual Renewals

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<th>3rd Quarter</th>
<th>4th Quarter</th>
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Mail to: Membership Chairperson, Old Pueblo Lapidary Club, 3118 N. Dale, Tucson, AZ 85712

The Business Meetings are held on the 2nd Saturday of each month. A pre-meeting social hour (except for the December meeting) is at 8:00 a.m., followed by an educational program, and ends with the monthly meeting. Visitors are most welcome.