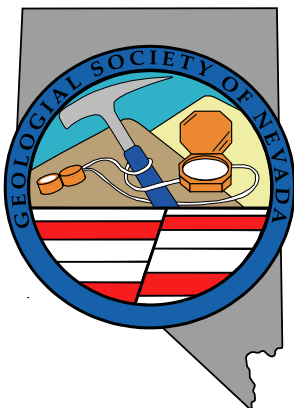

Geological Society of Nevada

SOUTHERN NEVADA CHAPTER

GSN Newsletter

October, 2002



Precious Opal Deposits of Virgin Valley, Humboldt County., Nevada

DATE: Thursday, October 24, 2002

SPEAKER: Mr. Walt Lombardo

LOCATION: Room 105
Lilly Fong Geoscience building

TIME: 5:30 p.m. Social hour
6:30 p.m. Presentation

Announcements: Visit the website for up to date info!
<http://geoscience.unlv.edu/GSN/gsnsc.htm>

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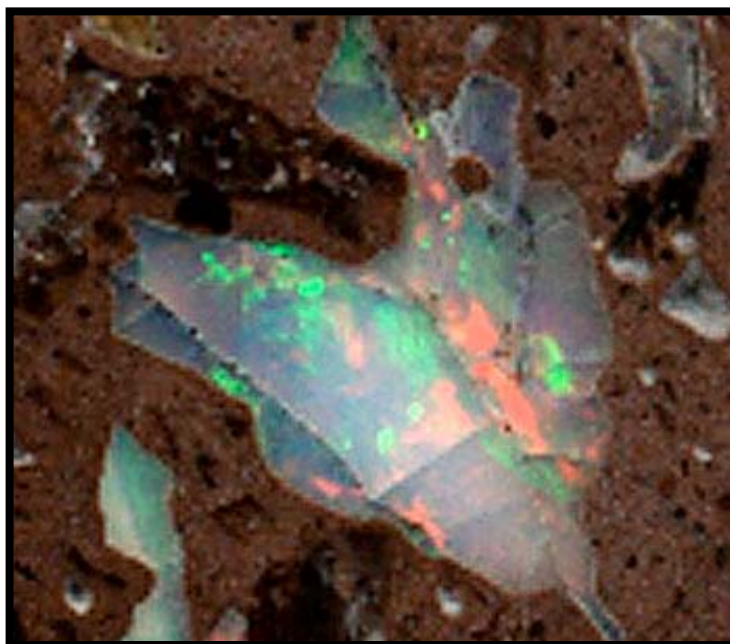


Photo courtesy of: <http://www.canadianrockhound.com>

Precious Opal Deposits of Virgin Valley, Humboldt County., Nevada

Mr. Walt Lombardo –

Abstract (GSN- Las Vegas meeting on October 24, 2002)

14 million years ago, temperate forests of Sequoia and Ginkgo were destroyed in a series of volcanic eruptions and the subsequent formation of the Virgin Valley caldera. Host rocks are predominantly layers of rhyolites and volcanic ash hundreds of meters thick, capped by basalt flows. Late stage hydrothermal activity mobilized minerals, replacing petrified wood and rarely other fossils with silica (including opal) and iron and manganese oxides. Opal found in the region ranges from common opal to white precious to black precious opal that rivals the finest gem material from Australia. Autunite and other uranium minerals are disseminated in the rhyolites and comprise a low-grade uranium resource of considerable size. Some common opal contains autunite and is sought after by collectors of fluorescent minerals.

The opal deposits of Virgin Valley are situated on mining claims in the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge, in northwestern Nevada, approximately 40 miles west of Denio. Several of the largest mines are open seasonally to collectors on a fee basis. Many fine and valuable fiery black opals have been found at the Virgin Valley mines, including the Roebling Opal, a 2600-carat opal on display at the National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian.

Mr. Walt Lombardo

Professional Geologist

Walt Lombardo is Senior Geologist and Chief of Southern Nevada Operations for the Nevada Division of Minerals. He is a twenty-two year resident of Las Vegas. Walt received a B.A. in Geology-Anthropology in 1978 from the University of Rochester, New York. He worked as a geologist for the Water Resources Center of Desert Research Institute in Las Vegas; American Borate Company in Death Valley, California; as well as an exploration consultant for several gold-mining companies. Walt opened the Southern Nevada Office in 1988. Functions of the office include maintenance of the state database of producing mines; review of federal policies and decisions on mining and land use issues; liaison with federal, state, and local government agencies regarding mineral resource issues; liaison to law enforcement agencies on mining and precious metals fraud; and public information and education on mineral resource issues.

Look! Its a *NEW* GSN web site!

<http://www.gsnv.org>

<http://geoscience.unlv.edu/GSN/gsnsc.htm>

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GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEVADA

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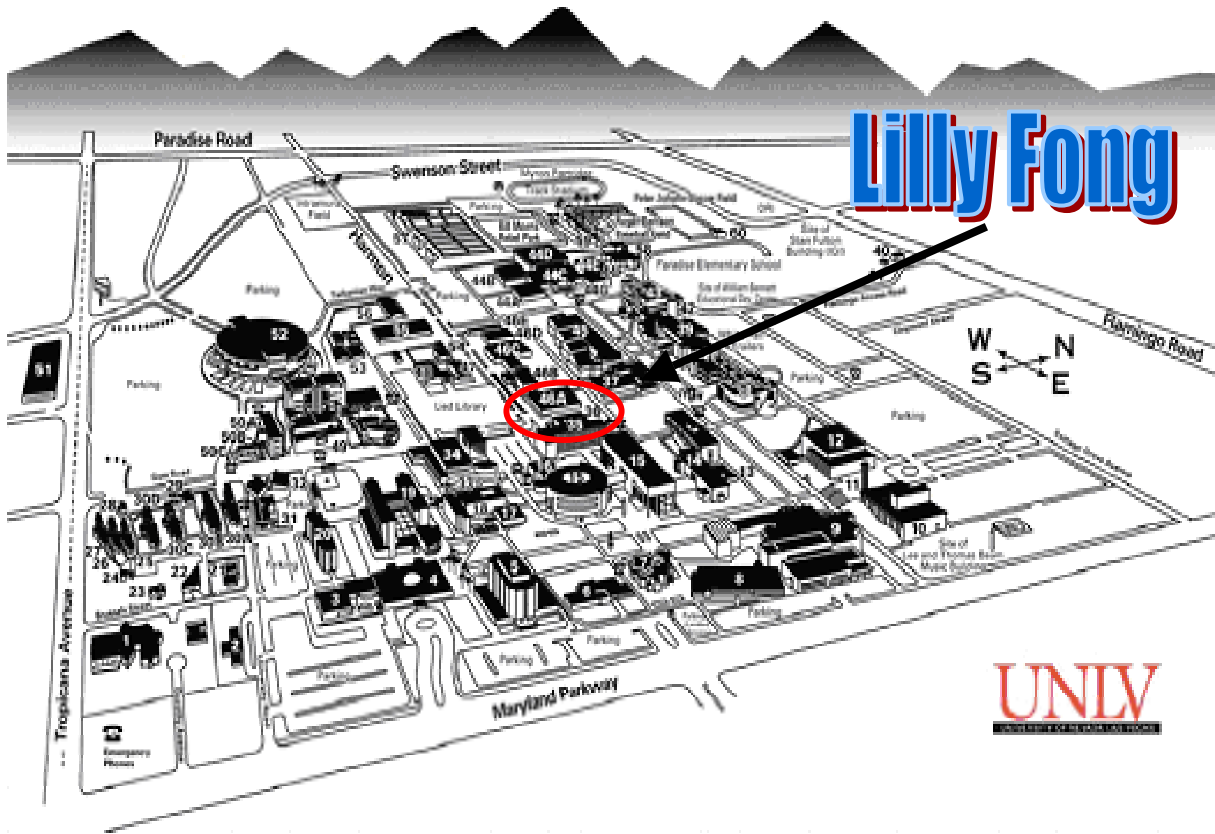
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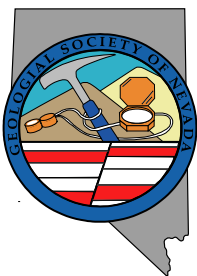
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