



# April Newsletter

4/2021

Volume 2021, Number 4

## In This Issue

- President's Meanderings
- Editor's pick
- Programs for the future
- Note from Vice President
- Note from the Editor
- Note from Membership Chairperson
- Field Trips
- Executive meeting minutes
- Memories
- Article by Dave Woolley

Meeting at Miller Center 301  
Grove Street  
Lynchburg, VA 24501 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Wed of the month  
7:00 pm until 9:00 pm

Wintery weather meetings  
schedule is if the Lynchburg  
schools are down for  
weather then the meeting is  
cancelled

Workshop is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday  
of the month.

Meetings are cancelled until  
further notice.

## President's Meanderings:

By James Tomlin

*Old lapidarians don't die, they just recrystallize*

I am so happy that we are beginning to get a glimpse of normalcy back to our community with the return of club meetings. I am really looking forward to seeing your faces (although covered) I feel there will be smiles all around. I have gotten so used to not seeing people it may be strange being up front again, so please excuse me if I get a bit tongue tied. Oh the stories we will have after such a long absence and struggle. So what have you been up to? What places have you dug? Have you learned anything new? I have used a lot of my time learning some new lapidary arts. Wire wrapping was a fun new outlet. I am nowhere near the level of skill as some of you are but it helps me to appreciate the patience and skill you all have. I have had the chance to pass down some knowledge of Cabochon making to some young lapidary enthusiasts, who were thrilled with their hard work. I can't wait to see what you all have been working on!

Your fellow Rockhound,  
James Tomlin

**Meeting held in person at the Aviary at the Parks and Recreation building near Miller Park. Time is 7:00 on Wednesday April 21<sup>st</sup>. Masks and Social Distancing will be in place. Hand Sanitizer will be available.**

## 2020 Officers

### PRESIDENT

**James Tomlin**

(434)258-2886

[tomlin.jamesm@yahoo.com](mailto:tomlin.jamesm@yahoo.com)

### First Vice President

**Steve Boylan**

### Second Vice President

### Secretary – Holly Tomlin

[Fireeyes1981@yahoo.com](mailto:Fireeyes1981@yahoo.com)

### Treasurer – Joan Moore

[jmoore64@msn.com](mailto:jmoore64@msn.com)

### Membership – Debbie Wade

[debbie5227@yahoo.com](mailto:debbie5227@yahoo.com)

### Editor – Steve Gordon

(434) 942-1836

[stevegordon@comcast.net](mailto:stevegordon@comcast.net)

### Members At Large -

**Eric Routon**

### Youth Out Reach

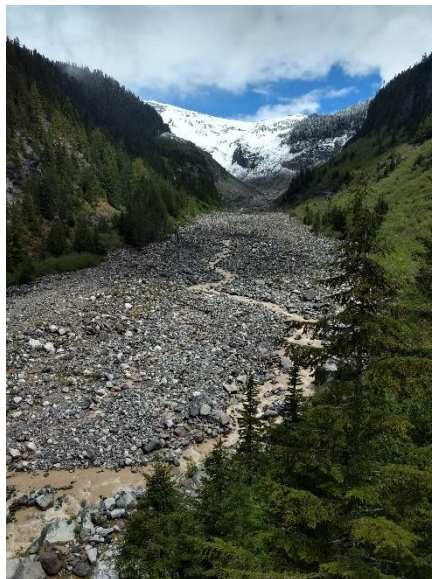


## Editor's Pick

Here are some pictures from our trip out in Washington State. The first picture is Palouse Falls in the eastern part of Washington.



This picture is some of the downed trees from the eruption of Mount St. Helens.



The left picture is some of the rocks that flowed down the mountain from the eruption. The right picture is a sculpture of Sasquatch made out of the ash that fell from the eruption.



## \*Program for this month\*

Our meeting, April 21<sup>st</sup>, will be in the Aviary at Parks and Recreation. We will be taking temperature at the door and mask will be required along with social distancing. We will have sanitizer for use and mask for those that forgot theirs or just need one.

### April Program - Good to Be Here Night

Bring three samples of something you have collected, or three samples of something you have made. Put your samples on display. Put your name and sample identification on the sheet with your display. We will share your presentation with the membership.

And as a bonus, Steve Boylan will present a short program about the NASA Perseverance Rover.

---

## First Vice President

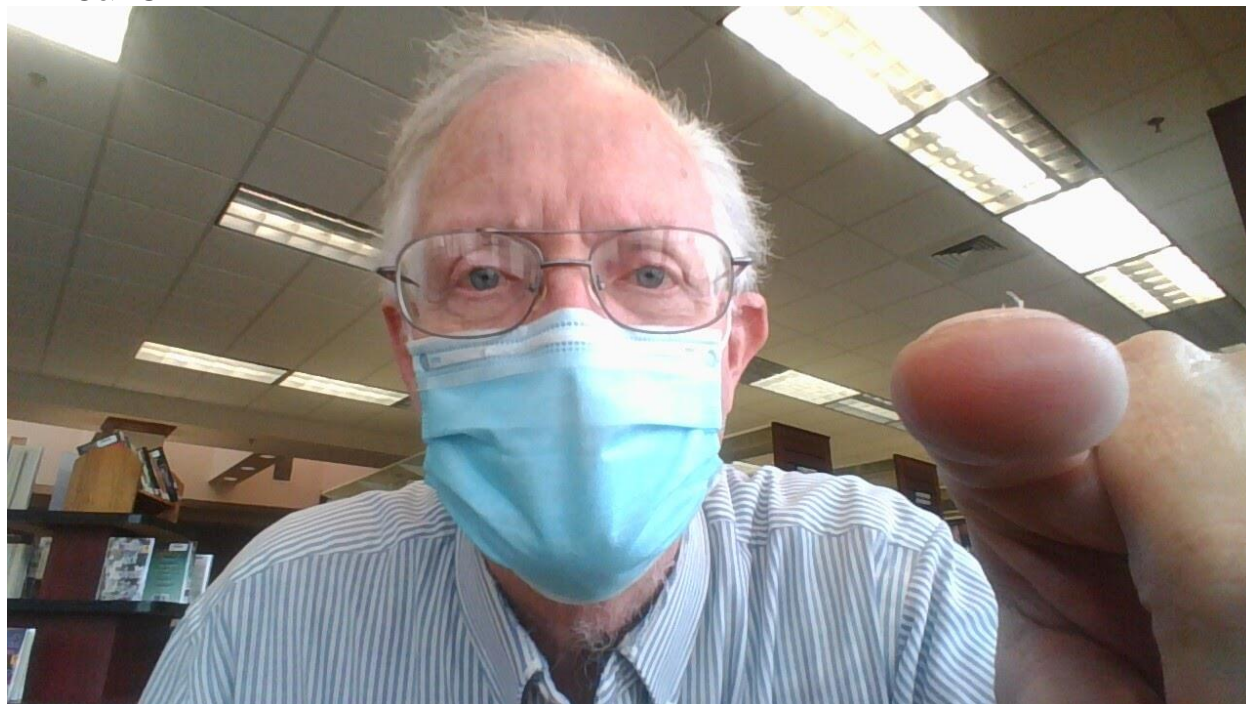
### First Vice President Message

I sent an email to the President. He said I could be vice president. So here I am. I did not think that would work. Oh no. See picture of me below at Forest Library on Wi-Fi with a google Chromebook.

The rock for April is greenstone. For thirteen years I started my chemistry classes with the same greenstone rock which came from Boxley quarry Mt. Athos. At school, we have been through two presidents, numerous administrators, three different learning management systems. But amazingly the same greenstone rock has worked as the class opener. Says something about geological time.

We will have a really big program coming up. You will really like it. But you already knew that.

Cheers  
Steve Boylan  
FVP G&MSL



---

## Note from the Editor

Hi All,

I have been away for a couple of months but will be here through April. So I will make the meeting and look forward to seeing all of you. Remember to bring something to show. I use to call this story time as everyone has a story to go along with something that you found or made.

I would love some pictures from any of you and about anything to put in the newsletter. That would give me a visual inspiration and maybe bring joy to others that have not seen you this year.

That is all for now,

Steve

Remember to send me your "Why I became a Rockhound" short story. Also photos of things you done this past year and bench tips that you have found helpful.

My email is [stevegordon@comcast.net](mailto:stevegordon@comcast.net)

---

## Note from the Membership Chair-person

Debbie Wade

**REMINDER: Membership Chair at - [debbie5227@yahoo.com](mailto:debbie5227@yahoo.com)**

---

## Field Trips

Later, still waiting for the world to return to normal.

**No Executive Meeting or regular meeting minutes**

## Cleaning your MINERAL SPECIMENS

(Copied from the Burlington Gem and Mineral Club newsletter)

Although the scare of a pandemic has kept most of us high-risk people at home this past year, which does not mean that opportunities to work on our favorite hobby have ceased. This is a good time to organize, clean, trim, and label your specimens. Since micros are a part of my collection, cleaning is of utmost importance as dust and dirt particles are especially unsightly under 10x or 20x magnification.

Boxes, egg cartons, and newspapers are all useful items to have for storing and transport specimens before cleaning. Photo by Alice Wack



When I collect in the field, most of the things I keep are tossed into a bucket. However, I do carry newspaper and egg cartons along in case anything is a known keeper or is fragile. When I get home, each item is removed from the bucket, rinsed in water, and left to dry. Smaller pieces are placed into egg cartons and larger ones in boxes. This first rinse is important as many pegmatites are loaded with mica and it needs to be rinsed off.

**Label the containers** so you will know where it was collected and when. The specimens are then put aside for more cleaning and trimming. This is a great time to check for fluorescence. With the specimens spread out in cartons or flats, it is relatively easy and may prevent you from scrubbing off flakes of Autunite (a mildly radioactive, yellow-greenish fluorescent phosphate mineral) Also, some fluorescent minerals might be affected by even small amounts of vinegar. **When I have time, I examine each specimen to identify what it is and what further cleaning or trimming that needs to be done.**

My first effort at real cleaning is usually with unless you know that will not damage or remove anything else. For instance, if the item is clearly quartz, especially from Palermo, examine it closely for other minerals [that could be easily damaged or easily removed by scrubbing]. Childrenite crystals, apatite, Brazilianite, Palermoite and Strunzite all especially have a tendency to attach to auartz. A used toothbrush or even a soft wire brush might work fine if nothing else is attached. Use plenty of water when cleaning. Bob Whitmore, the former owner of the Palermo mines in North Groton, New Hampshire, is an avid mineral collector and well known authority on New Hampshire mineral localities. He has suggested a cleaning solution that I find works very well: Mix a softener (Calgon) with a detergent such as Dawn, add a bit of lemon juice or white vinegar and some water. I let things soak overnight and then rinse thoroughly. You do NOT want remnants of soap or anything else left on the specimen. You may want to examine the specimen under a loupe or scope and you could further spot clean certain areas with an arts brush using a twirling motion. Do NOT use this technique if fragile fibers such as Strunzite are present as they will be destroyed. I would strongly suggest using a microscope or loupe on a very regular basis. You might also see coatings or wedged pieces that are easily removed with a sharp sewing needle. Also observe if microfractures might need gluing or decide if that could be a great spot to begin trimming the size down. I never use an ultrasonic cleaner as it can damage fragile crystals or crystals with inclusions such as air bubbles in Quartz.

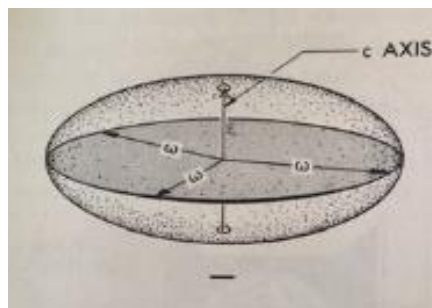
The use of acids such as Iron Out or muriatic acid should be done **outside with EXTREME caution**. I will use each of these on very rare occasions. Always rinse very thoroughly afterwards as white precipitate may be left behind and you do not want any lingering acid on your specimen. Know the dangers and appropriate procedures when using ANY acids! A good cleaning is essential. Even Herkimer diamonds may look beautiful when you find them, but a good cleaning makes them even better. A brush will not harm Herkimers. **Do NOT permanently mount any specimen without a good cleaning first.** I learned my lesson the hard way. If a specimen is found on the dumps, chances are, it needs a good cleaning. I had to remount my entire Palermo TN collection years ago. Laueite crystals are beautiful under a 10x or 20x scope or loupe but remember, particles of dirt are also magnified. Just a small amount of Elmers Glue or mineral putty works well. I have made some super discoveries after cleaning a specimen. A blackbrown rock that I found last summer at Palermo turned into one of the best Laueite specimens I own. Good luck! — **John Wilda.**

## Article for this month: Useful Crystallography

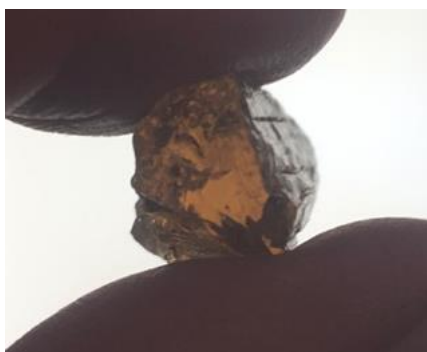
(a continuance from the special edition)

By Dave Woolley

Experimental faceters may want to ‘push the envelope’ by modifying the Pavilion main-facet-angle to match the *optics*: the optimal Pavilion main-facet-angle will change slightly for different orientations. Compare the orientations of Scapolite, a Tetragonal, Uniaxial-negative, gem. The Refractive Index is greater than all other orientations looking down the “C” Axis. Remember an Indicatrix represents the *interior optics*, not the *exterior form* as represented by the “Pickup Stick” models of the video.



Uniaxial negative



Looking down the “C” Axis, coincidentally the “Optic” Axis. A higher Pavilion main-facet-angle will make this orientation a little *more attractive* and, in this case, *provide a richer color*. This orientation will yield two or three smaller finished round gems with sparkle and beautiful color.



Looking down an “A” crystallographic axis of the same piece of Scapolite. This orientation yields the largest gem (cash value), an oval or rectangle, but will have lessor sparkle and poor color. Cut to the lessor Refractive Index, “A” Axes Pavilion main-facet-angle to avoid the no reflection from the end Pavilion main-facets. Left to right is the “C” crystallographic Axis, coincidentally the “Optic” Axis in Tetragonal crystals.

## [Other Links that you may want to check out:](#)

### **International Gem Society**

<https://www.gemsociety.org/reference-library/>

### **Mineral Cleaning for Amateurs**

John's website is full of information that all mineral collectors will find useful and interesting.

<http://www.johnbetts-fineminerals.com/>

### **Morefield Mine Tour:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5aQp57HMso>

### **Impromptu lecture on crystallography:**

<https://youtube.com/channel/UCrOm2CQnPCLV8FtSKWHuJCw>

### **A Guide to Ethical and Conflict-Free Jewelry**

<https://ethicaljewellery.org/introduction>.

### **Insurance Institute of Jewelry Appraisal**

[https://instituteofappraisal.com/Investigation\\_of\\_Artificial\\_Color\\_Infusion\\_of\\_Gemstones.pdf](https://instituteofappraisal.com/Investigation_of_Artificial_Color_Infusion_of_Gemstones.pdf)

[https://instituteofappraisal.com/Exposing\\_the\\_GIA\\_Juggernaut.pdf](https://instituteofappraisal.com/Exposing_the_GIA_Juggernaut.pdf)

### **Rock collecting guide for geology beginners**

<https://www.basementguides.com/rock-collecting-and-geology-basics/>

### **Facebook Link for the club**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/432839874271992/?ref=share>

---

If you need to renew your club membership you can let me or Debbie Wade know and we can email you the form. You can make checks out to GMSL.

Our Mailing address is:

**The Gem and Mineral Society of Lynchburg, VA, INC.**

**PO Box 11975**

**Lynchburg, VA 24506-1975**

**[lynchburgrockclub@yahoo.com](mailto:lynchburgrockclub@yahoo.com)**