



February Newsletter

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Meeting at Miller Center
301 Grove Street
Lynchburg, VA 24501
3rd 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 2nd Saturday of the month.

Meetings are cancelled until further notice.

President's Meanderings:

By James Tomlin

Hello all. I started this February with a little walk on the tracks. I have had a lot on my mind recently with troubling times be it from the stress of COVID-19 or wellbeing of family members. I don't always take time to just detox from it all but on occasion I get a whim to step to the side and breath. There is a spot I pass by often that is right by a railroad crossing and I have heard this can be a decent place to find rocks at times. I pass by all the time and say to myself "I need to just stop by and see what's there". I felt this was the day I would see if I could find a diamond amongst the rough. I go and park by the wayside. I see a pile of stone that has been placed for fill as there were larger holes alongside the tracks due to weathering. I walked along the track for a while more thinking about everything going on in my life but picking up a stone or two here and there. While on the walk I never found anything of much interest. Not feeling too disappointed because it was a nice walk and I did finally check out the area to put my mind at ease. I was headed to the truck and then low and behold sticking out in the huge pile of limestone was.... you guessed it another piece of limestone, however, this particular piece caught my eye because of the variation and wave that the sediment had formed so perfectly violent, yet so serene in its unified chaos. The limestone was wedged and yet flattened, in with quartz layers and feldspar pattern. It spoke to me, my emotion was transcribed on the surface of this otherwise ordinary specimen. Well I needed this milk jug sized backbreaker of a rock, if nothing else as a reminder of some deeper meaning of my walk and at the least a teaching tool for me to learn more about later. It will find its new home in my rock garden this spring. I never thought I would feel a connection with a rock before becoming a Rockhound but here I am, Hi, my name is James and I have an addiction to rocks.

Your fellow Rockhound,
James Tomlin

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Youth Out Reach

Newsletter Editor pick

Some Pictures of the year 2020



Here are some pictures of what I have been doing. First is a knife that I made from a railroad spike. And below is a stone that I have cut from some uranium glass. It fluoresces, as you can imagine, green. I have now moved on to forge a dagger from a truck leaf spring and to real stones.



Program for this month

At The time of writing the newsletter I have nothing for the meeting time.

I have no others as of this time.

Will update to the three month ahead once we get a good handle on things.

Note from the Editor

Hi All,

Well, January has come and gone and we are still locked down. I got my first Covid shot on Jan. 29th and have my second one set up. I travel again this Spring for work, even though I am retired, so the newsletter will be hard for me in March through May. I will do what I can but make no promises.

I am still not getting any stories or picture from you all to put into the newsletter so please help me out.

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, Happy New Year.

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

Note from the Membership Chair-person

Debbie Wade

REMINDER: Membership Chair at - debbie5227@yahoo.com

Field Trips

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

No January Executive Meeting or regular meeting

Memories

Old Faceters Never Die, They Just Keep Polishing Away. By Dave Woolley

I recently received a letter from the company that has been looking after my home and cars for two generations. Over all that time they never resolved any problem for me, but they did put the fear of God into my family. We have diligently given them and their children money to achieve absolutely nothing. I never met any of them in person but I'm sure that they have been very grateful to me. The letter was sobering. It said that now I have passed my 75th birthday it might be a good time to create a Will and find an Executor. I realized that my rock hunting and gem cutting days are now numbered, at least in the mind of a legal actuary.

I take great comfort when meeting elderly folks who are still active. Last year at a rock show I met a gentleman in his 90's still collecting and faceting. I reckon that if I play my cards right, I could easily spend another quarter century messing about with rocks before they plant me. The letter got me thinking to the point that I needed to retreat my shop along with a wee dram for some deep pondering. I have found, bought, traded, and given away tons of rocks, so my basement is well stuffed with my collecting inheritance. Cutting machines have come and gone. It just got worse because I recently acquired another faceting machine from a gentleman who just walked away from it including three buckets of stuff: faded old books, rusty tools, and broken crystals, bags of colored bits too small to cut, and junk rocks from God-knows-where.

As I sat there contemplating his junk and my mortality, I sipped my Scotch. My eyes drifted around the basement. Many years it sheltered anything I thought I might someday find a use. I was determined to remedy the situation. Full of enthusiasm, I grabbed one of three plastic buckets and dumped it on the workbench and sorted: one pile for keeps and one to toss. I was on a roll. Soon I had sorted all three buckets. I had created a small mountain of useless stuff. I put the remaining good stuff in the buckets and found by some loaves-and-fish miracle I now had three buckets full of stuff worth keeping and a big pile of crap that just fit an additional two buckets. How the heck did that happen?

I put the stuff to toss by the basement door and returned my attention to the rest of the shop. I am sure that most intrepid rock hounds keep extras, just in case. Sadly, I am well up in the worst 10% - like the poor souls on TV who can hardly get in the house because of their inability to toss stuff. At the end of the evening, I staggered back up the stairs, well pleased with my achievements. I must have cleared 3 square feet of space.

The next morning, I walked back downstairs and thought the better of it. I put the three good buckets on the shelves and found space for the other two buckets. Never mind; I'll put it in my Will . . . my son is a rock hound and he can deal with it when I'm gone. I hereby nominate him as my Executor.

My apologies to Dylan Winters author of "Keep Turning Left" where I found inspiration for this story. Dylan pottered around the United Kingdom in a small sailboat, working his way up each estuary, river, and canal until he could go no further. He visited many cities, villages and historic sites along the way. When he returned downstream to the sea, he kept turning left. Enjoy his travels on YouTube: Goo

Article for this month: You too can be a part of Faceting History

By Dave Woolley

Scratches from the Master Lap #7

I have run into a horrible problem that shows up from time to time using my “new” \$1 Ultra Tec Faceting machine. Sometimes my girdle facets do not line up with the crown and pavilion girdle facets. Sometimes as I complete a complex design, the final facets cannot achieve meet point perfection. I have jiggled every bearing I could find and sense no play. Here is what the problem looks like:



Look at the height of the girdle facets and the misalignment of crown facets to the girdle. GRRrrr! Recent “Scratches” articles attempted to address this problem. While I think those comments are valid and probably helped, here is the source of my problem: Some of my old brass Lee dops date back to the mid-fifties. They and additions that came with my used Graves have seen a lot of use and abuse. Notice the



dings and dents caused by set screws.

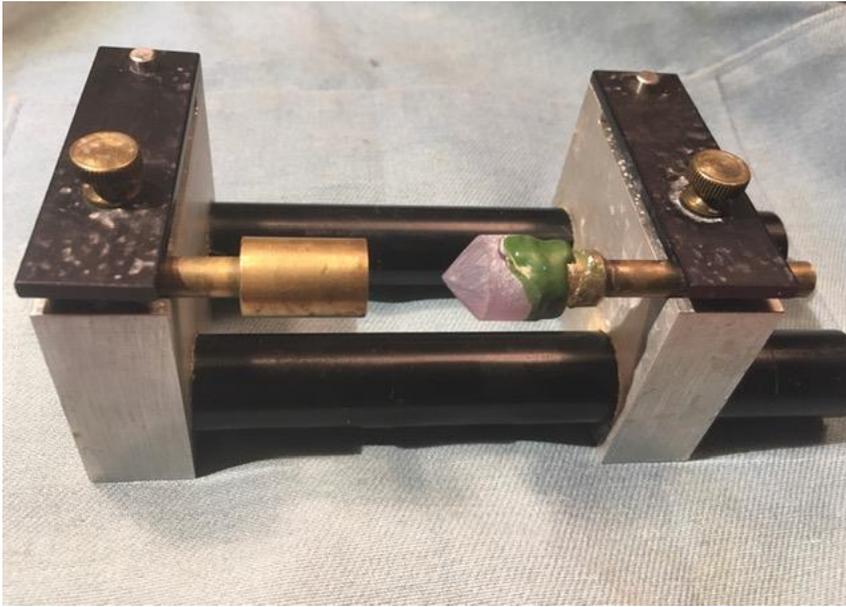
These imperfections cause misalignment of the dop the transfer block, and in the chuck.

I use a small, fine flat bastard file to polish of the rims of the depressions.



Careful: do not change the diameter or roundness of the dop shaft. This “cure” allows me to facet to near perfection. Be sure the dops are clean of any wax film or crud along the shaft: clean with alcohol.

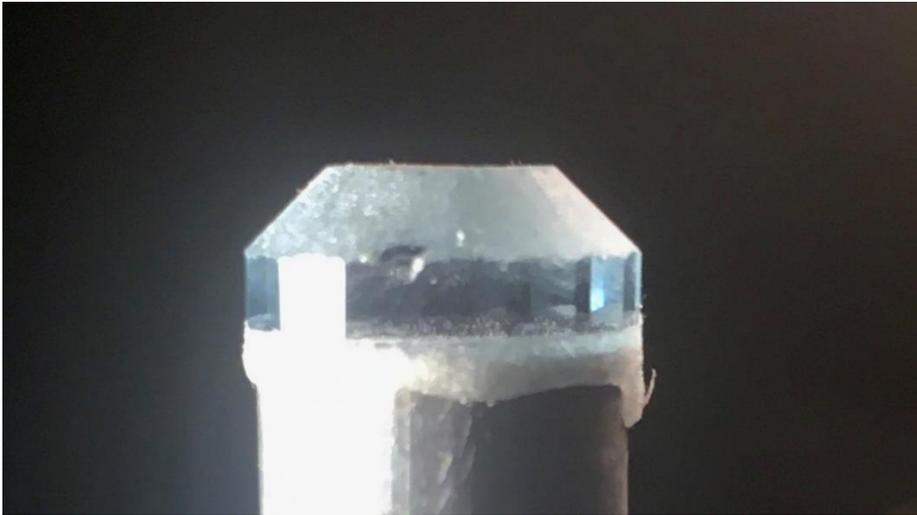
I am now using a transfer block that came with my used Facetron. It allows tensioning of each dop retaining plate (black): I rotate each dop separately as I increase the tightening (brass knob) of the retaining plate. This allows me to feel that the rotation of the dop is smooth with no high spots, proving the dop is well seated in the transfer block’s “V” groove. I like the Facetron transfer block because *after the dops are secured* the stone and original dop can be moved towards the new dop loaded with Epoxy. I also rotate the dop in the faceting machine feeling for a smooth rotation as I tighten the chuck.



Other brands: I would rotate the dop slightly while moving the stone towards the next dop with Epoxy. Assure yourself by the feel that there is no high spot on a dop resting in a “V” groove. Good luck with the dops-in-the-chuck-alignment if you have damaged dops.

The best solution is to throw away damaged dops and replace them.

Problem Solved



I'm now using fresh, previously-unused aluminum dops that came with my Ultra Tec.

[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/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.

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