

Maplewood Rock and Gem Club

General Meeting Minutes for May 20, 2024



Call to Order at 7:07

Meeting conducted by Chris Huffines

Minutes taken by Nancy Samuels

Announcements

- Visitors
 - Eric, Catherine, Jerry, Mike, and one more
- Upcoming August Show
 - We have enough vendors to fill inside and have space for only a few more outdoors.
 - We have some new vendors this year
 - Aug 10-11
 - Nancy will announce the show dates in the June newsletter and will announce that it's time to sign up to volunteer in the July newsletter.
- Treasurer
 - Income: \$6,437.26
 - Expense: \$1,372.44
 - April balance: \$36,057.20
- Shop
 - The shop is open for 6 more sessions each month. It is open for two sessions on every Thursday and two sessions on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays.
 - We have a new signup form online. This one is far easier to use.
 - Sessions are now \$10/session.
 - We have had a longstanding rule that if you can't come to a session that you are signed up for you need to cancel or you will still owe the fee. We haven't been enforcing this rule, but now we will be. Users need to cancel by two days before their reserved session or they will be charged whether or not they show up. This means that if you are signed up for a Thursday session, you need to cancel by midnight Tuesday.
 - All the saws are working now. Rich cleaned the trim saw and saw 2.

- Request: if the trim saw is churning up sludge, then the oil needs to be changed. The sludge ruins the blade. Please tell a Shop Steward if the trim saw is churning up sludge.
- Wire wrapping class coming up on June 15. Sign up today and we will collect names for a waiting list. The class only has room for 6 people.
- Ways and Means:
 - Angela and Brian joined the committee.
- Membership
 - 2 families joined tonight.
- Chris announced we need a VP, treasurer in training, webmaster, and other positions.
- Emily and Jenifer stepped in and ran the Juniors tonight because Amaryah had to go out of town unexpectedly.
- Paul has plume agate and a bucket of rocks in the silent auction, plus more interesting specimens to sell.
- There will be a memorial service for Georgia McMillan
 - June 30 from 1-4pm
 - Nancy will learn where it is.
 - Georgia was a founding member of our club and the Seed Beaders Group.
- Mineral Council trips
 - Ed Lehman of the Washington State Mineral Council has tools for you to use if you don't have your own, and he will loan them when you go on one of the field trips he is on. The description of field trips will tell you what kind of tools you will need.
<https://mineralcouncil.wordpress.com/>

Rock of the Month

- By Jim Grace about Faceting
 - Member of the North Puget Sound Faceting Guild
 - He demonstrates at the N. Seattle show, West Seattle Show, and the Everett show.

Experience

- He started at age 16 with a simple faceting machine.
- He's been buying rough stones and cutting them since he was 16.
- He taught his son at age 12.
- He cuts 40-50 per year and sells most of them.
- In 2014 he bought a house in Tucson so he can go to the shows.

- He cuts stones because he enjoys it, not to make money.

Faceting machines

- Our club's faceting machine is an entry level machine worth \$1000. Probably not good for competitions. The machine can be cleaned up and used.
- A faceting machine has a motor, flat lap, and a part that holds gem at precise angles.
- For \$400 you can get a flat lap for tourmaline and other
- Lightening Lap can be \$70 each. Should do 100 stones, but you can ruin it in one lap.

Learning to cut stones

- NW Rockhounds has four machines that people can use.
- Joining the North Puget Sound Faceting Guild will connect you to people with experience and help you find a secondhand machine.
- If you start cutting you could join a guild to learn how to restore a secondhand machine and use it.
- Use sound and vision as feedback on cutting.
- Two things are usually the cause of prematurely ruining a flat lap:
 - running a stone in one place
 - pushing too hard
- Grind from course to finer grit on the flat lap. Just like with a cab machine, each level of grit will leave grooves in the stone corresponding to the size of the grit. You keep going to a finer grit until the stone is polished. Softer stones will be finished with a lower finishing grit than harder stones.
 - Start with course grit, like 180 grit.
 - Then, grind with 600 grit.
 - Next use 1200 grit, and after this grinding, softer stones, like citrine will be ready for the final polish with cerium oxide.
 - Lightening lap has diamond embedded in some substance. Leaves smooth finish. On quartz can finish with 1200 and finish with cerium oxide.
 - 3000 or 8000 grit can finish harder stones.
 - You will need something like 56,000 grit for very hard stones, like emeralds.
- Rough stones you can facet
 - Smokey quartz and amethyst are found in Washington.
 - Oregon has sunstones.
 - Montana has sapphires.

- Choose stones that are perfectly transparent.

Designing and planning a cut

- He uses a flashlight to see imperfections in raw stones.
- Stones start as crystals with a particular crystal structure, and crystalline shapes have cleavage planes where they are more likely to cleave in two or fracture.
- You can't polish on the cleavage plane because it peels away.
- A facet on a crystal plane is unstable and fractures off.
- Design your cuts so none will be on a cleavage plane.
- Cut the pavilion (bottom) first. That's where the light is transmitted from. Light shines down into the stone and reflects off the facets of the pavilion.
- It takes him 5 hours to cut a quartz gem.
- Most shapes can be done with a recipe which tells you how to make each cut. The faceting guild has thousands of recipes you can look up.
- Because it is relatively inexpensive, you can cut quartz to whatever shape you want and not worry about how much you are grinding away.
- With an expensive rock like garnet, you cut the maximum size of pattern that the raw specimen can support. You want to cut away the smallest amount you can get away with.
- You will cut away fractures and imperfections; ending with only 25% of the raw stone in the finished gem is pretty good.
- He uses a 10x loupe to make the finishing cuts and to make sure the points match up.

Quality

- Windowing is a dead spot in the interior where the light goes through the back rather than reflecting out the crown. For the most glitter in the finished gemstone, you want to avoid windowing.
- Overseas workers cut stones for ½ dollar each and light doesn't shine back out the crown. They have windowing. The international buyers don't care about that. American customers buy gems regardless.
- Jewelry stores aren't willing to pay for well cut stones. Customers aren't either.

Gem cutting as a hobby

- Don't get into this to make money.
- Gem cutting is something you can do in an apartment. It doesn't require much space.

Show and Tell

- Gary talked about jasper found near Biggs Junction, Oregon.
- Gary Kirchberger gave bags of faceted gems to each Junior at the meeting.
- Paul Sherman – bought rocks from gift shops. Aquamarine (his birthstone), emerald, white sand from White Sands National Park in New Mexico, ash from a Mt. St. Helens eruption, and amethyst

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm