



The PRESQUE ISLE PROSPECTOR



Official Publication of the Gem City Rock and Mineral Society
Monthly Meetings, First Friday at 7:30 PM



February 2006

Last Month's Meeting:

Last month our program was 'Indoor Fossil Hunting' – Kirk brought in some coal-shale that he collected some time ago, along with some tools to help us split apart the layers to look for fossils of plants and animals. And we found some! Well, at least some bits of stuff. Shark's teeth, fish scales, vertebrae, etc. And we got to play with rocks, and get dirty! (Coal shale is, after all, coal-ish, and quite a mess.) What else can you ask for? ☺ Thanks, Kirk, for bringing us gazillions of pounds of rocks and letting us play!

This Month's Meeting:

This month our meeting will be Saturday, February 4th, at 9:30AM. Our program will be on faceting – my experiences cutting my first stone (or, "What NOT to Do When Faceting"), and a little bit of gemology that it will be handy to know before faceting. See the article later in the newsletter.

Also, now that we've entered a new Calendar Year, club Dues are due! If you joined at the show last July (2005), your dues are paid through the end of 2006; if not, it's time to pay up again for another year. Dues are still as follows:

\$5.00	Junior (under 18)
\$10.00	Individual
\$15.00	Couple (or parent and one child)
\$20.00	Family

Please try to remember to bring your dues along to the meeting, or mail a check to the club Treasurer, Val Engelleiter, at her address in the footer of the newsletter. We will give you a month or two to get your dues in, but those not current on their dues will stop getting the newsletter and not be eligible to participate in any club activities! So please help us keep you current by renewing promptly.

Board Meeting:

We will be having a brief Board Meeting before the regular meeting, at 9:00AM Saturday. Mostly this will be to discuss a budget for the coming year, and changes in the Gem Show budget (like security). If you can think of any other changes we need to think about or expenses we're likely to run into, please call an officer to let us know.

Library Window Display:

Gee, it seems like we just saw this topic in the newsletter a few months ago! And you did – last summer, we had a display on "Lapidary – How Do You Cut Rocks, and What Do You Do With Them" in the window of the Presque Isle branch of the library, and then moved much of that display down to the main library to put in a display table. That went over so well that they asked us to put a display in the much larger display window at the main library by the Children's room for the month of May – and we said yes! That means we'll have to come up with quite a bit more to put in the display.

One section could be a recycling of the Lapidary display, but that would take only about a third of the space.

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We have quite a few display-quality mineral specimens that came from the Westfield-area club, that could form the nucleus of a section on mineral collecting as another aspect of the hobby. If any club members have further specimens that they would lend for the display, that would help.

We might also want to see if we have enough display-quality fossil material for another section – either club material or from member's collections that they would be willing to lend.

Unfortunately, a lot of material that is great for a personal collection doesn't work as well in a display case, just because you can't get close enough to see it; display case items need to be big and showy. Please check through your own collections, and if you happen to have any bigger, showier type items, please consider lending them for the display. The case is locked and secure, so your only concern would be whether you can bear to be parted from them for a month!

Adventures in Beginning Faceting:

Well, I've been working on the club's faceter for a while now, interrupted extensively by the holidays, but for the past month I've been able to spend more time with it – first truing up the machine with dial indicators and angles, measuring and adjusting and trying to get the machine into as close to perfect alignment as possible. Unfortunately, this is not terribly close to perfect alignment. But it's certainly much better than it was.

Then I was finally ready to start cutting a stone! Clear quartz is almost universally recommended as the first stone to cut, because it's easy to come by and it's cheap. We at the club have the tremendous advantage of having a goodly supply of optical-quality quartz that Kirk collected when a local electronics firm discarded their old supply of natural quartz in favor of the more uniform and predictable synthetic quartz that they use now. This means we can get material for trial stones for FREE! Which is a good thing – as you'll see later.

So I thought I'd start with a fairly good-size chunk, thinking it would be easier to see a larger piece. I tell you now, this is the wrong thing to do. A large piece just means there's that much more material to remove when you're roughing out the basic shape of the stone, and since you really need to see the surface quality and the exact way the facets meet up anyway, it's better to start off smaller rather than larger. So I quit that one and chose a smaller piece. The one I used was 17.4 x 15.3 x 17.4mm, as shown – sort of lopsided, but not too bad.



I started out using a 100-grit sintered lap that I had for my own All-You-Need machine – the rough lap that we have for the faceter must be charged with diamond paste, and since I haven't done that before and I had an alternative, I chose the easy wimpy way and used my own lap. So I dopped the quartz with a cyanoacrylate glue that had been recommended, and put it in the machine and started cutting.

It quickly became apparent that there were a few items of essential equipment that I hadn't heard or read about. One is a comfortable chair – one in which you can sit for hours, and will let you sit close enough to the faceter and at the correct height to rest your arm on the machine, so that you can keep the stone in motion on the lap (you never want the stone to stay in one place or you'll wear grooves in the lap, and a truly flat lap is critical to getting truly flat facets) without your arm falling off.

The other piece of essential equipment is a personal stereo with headphones – this is to keep you from going insane while listening to the noise of the motor, and the noise of the stone scritch-scratch-scratching across the coarse lap. It is not *quite* as bad as nails on a chalkboard, and the other laps are not nearly so bad, but as you'll be spending quite a bit of time with the coarse lap, you may need something to help with the noise and the tedium of roughing. The music can't be classical – I tried a CD of Karl Jenkin's "Diamond Music" (you know, that music behind those really good DeBeers commercials a few years ago?) as an appropriate mood-setter, but classical music has too much dynamic range – you can't hear anything but the loud parts. So find something generally loud with a good beat, and you'll be set. Since it took me 4 to 4-1/2 hours to rough out the pavilion, this is worthwhile.

This might be a good place to mention that in my reading up on faceting in various places, some people say you really should pre-form your stones – that is, grind them roughly to the shape of the finished stone – before you put it in the faceter, and others say don't bother. The arguments *for* pre-forming go that pre-forming will help you get a more accurate shape, more accurate placing of the dop, and save wear on the roughing lap. The arguments *against* say that it's a waste of time and if you don't do it well, you can end up making your stone smaller than it should be. I tell you now, at least for beginning and at least for stones over 10-15mm, the biggest argument *for* making a pre-form is saving time and your sanity on the rough grind.

So, okay, I'm rough grinding, but because the shape of the stone was so lop-sided, I really don't know exactly where the center of the mass will end up (this is where that pre-forming really would have helped, but I was lazy and thought this would be easier – HAH!). So I was grinding some on each of four sides, to make a square. This made it much easier to see how much more I had to go to get all 4 sides to meet in a point, and how far down I needed to go to make the pavilion be near the 2/3 of the height of the stone it should be. You can see at this point that I've got the square, it meets close to a point, but I've got a good bit more to remove on the front side – and then I'll have to get the other sides to match. Then I can grind the other 4 pavilion mains between the first four, and they go much more quickly because there's less material left to remove.



I got through rough grinding the eight pavilion mains eventually, and then went to the girdle, which has 16 sides at the same index points as the pavilion break facets (which you cut with the rough lap). This sets the basic shape and size of the stone – unless you mess up later and have to cut down more. At this point, the stone is about 11.2mm – less than I would have hoped for from the initial side of the piece, but hey, I'm learning. Now it's time to go to the next lap – the 325-grit.

Now here's one of the Catch-22 areas of any grinding-sanding operation: the coarser your grit, the faster it grinds (*yea!*); the coarser your grit, the deeper the scratches it will leave, and the more material you have to remove with the next finer grit to get them all off (*boo!*). This is compounded with a material that may chip as well as scratch. You can see how rough the surface is in the photo. So next time, I may try to remember not to take the stone down *quite* this far before switching to the next finer grit. But for this stone, all I can do is go on to the 325 now, and take the surface down until the scratches are gone. This is actually tougher to see than you might think, but I'm pretty sure I got them.

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So then on to the 600-grit lap – and now is when you cut in the pavilion break facets (the smaller facets between the pavilion mains, next to the girdle). Because these facets are so much smaller, they are pretty fast to cut even on the 600 lap, and slower cutting means less chance of over-cutting – but, of course, not *no* chance, and, well, it's pretty easy to do. I learned quickly to “cut a little, look a lot” on these facets. There didn't seem to be a good way to tell when you'd cut it to match the rest except to look with a loupe every two swipes of the lap or so.

Then on to the 3000-grit lap. Then on to the polish – and that's when I found the scratches. Most of the facet would polish up fine, but scratches that I hadn't seen, even with the loupe, showed up in the polished facets. This could be from one of several factors: insufficient material taken off to remove



all the scratches from a previous grit; contamination from a previous grit; or that our brand-new laps have some uneven spots or loosely graded grit, and need to be broken in. Since I was pretty careful about the first two, I thought I'd try to eliminate the third possibility by polishing up a nice slab of agate on the new laps – this should wear down any high spots. But I ran out of time to get it done before this newsletter needs to go out, so you'll have to see what happened at the meeting this Saturday!

By the way, while we watched a video demonstrating how to facet on an Ultra-Tech faceting machine a few months ago, it was an older tape and the video quality had suffered. The Eastern Federation Library has among its new items this one:

- V581 The Art of Gem Cutting by Fac-ETTE Mfg. in DVD Format. This is a long one at 124 minutes.

If those of us who are really interested in faceting want to see it, we might set up a sub-group if the whole club doesn't want to see another faceting video. Of course, since it's new, it might be a pretty hot property for a while.

Rockhound TV This Month:

PBS: Nova: Jewel of the Earth. (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/jewel/>) Forty million years ago a diverse community of insects living at the bottom of a tree in a temperate forest chanced into a sticky pool of pine resin. Then a mere 67 years ago a young boy named David Attenborough was given the amber stone containing the entombed bugs. "Jewel of the Earth" explores the remarkable time capsule of ancient life preserved in this and countless other samples of fossilized tree resin, or amber. Coincidentally, David's brother Richard starred in the movie that made amber famous: Jurassic Park, in which Richard plays a billionaire entrepreneur who extracts DNA from amber-entombed mosquitoes in order to clone living replicas of their prey—dinosaurs. While such a scenario is probably unlikely, amber can resurrect prehistoric life in a quite different way, as NOVA demonstrates by probing the amber-encased clues that paint a fascinating picture of ancient biomes. Feb. 14, 8:00PM.

Discovery Channel: China's Mega-Dam. The Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River in China is the largest public works project in the history of mankind. Its size, scale, and potential are unprecedented in engineering history. The dam is in its final stages of completion but will it work? Feb. 1, 12:00Noon; Feb. 26, 5:00PM. **Walking with Dinosaurs: Dawn of the Dinosaurs.** The plant-eaters of the Triassic fade into extinction as the age of dinosaurs brings predators like coelophysis to the food chain. But giant sauropods, cynodonts and reptilian predators alike are threatened when lightning sparks a wildfire. Feb. 2, 11:00AM; Feb. 25, 10:00AM. **Walking with Dinosaurs: Sea and Sky Creatures.** Follow the lives of dinosaurs living in the shallow sea surrounding Europe in 160 million BC and living on South American soil in 125 million BC. The birth of a baby dino tempts underwater predators, and flying reptiles vie for prey with 40-ft. wingspans. Feb. 2, 12:00Noon; Feb. 25, 11:00AM. **Walking with Dinosaurs: Deep Impact.** Below the Antarctic Circle, spring brings lush vegetation, as well as migrating predators. A carnosaur decimates a clan of leaellynasaura just as one mother tends to her nest of hatchlings. A state of hibernation called torpor sustains them during winter. Feb. 2, 1:00PM; Feb. 25, 12:00Noon. **Extreme Engineering: Excavators.** At the world's largest open pit iron mine, a \$10 million new, custom-built super shovel is commissioned to meet a sudden worldwide surge in the demand for iron. Will miners find success with the fastest, most technologically advanced excavator ever made? Feb. 2, 7:00PM, 11:00PM. **Mega Machines: Task Masters.** Witness the awesome power and massive bulk of machines that do the grunt work of the world. Fly high with the military's most massive plane, the C5 Galaxy. And pound it out with a machine with mind-blowing abilities, the Hydrema 910 Mine Clearing Vehicle. Feb. 2, 8:00PM, 12:00Mid.; Feb. 20, 10:00AM, 5:00PM. **Mega Machines: Monster Beasts.** Board a floating behemoth, the Asian Hercules II floating crane. Get the scoop on an earth-shattering sized shovel and meet the beast, the GE Evolution locomotive. These monster machines patrol the country side, cruise the rivers and reshape the planet. Feb. 2, 10:00PM, 2:00AM; Feb. 20, 4:00PM. **Earthquake Storms.** Earthquake storms are a deadly natural disaster. Istanbul, one of the biggest cities in the world, could soon be hit by the terror of nature's force. Four million lives are at risk and there is nothing anyone can do about it. Feb. 3, 11:00AM. **Mega-Tsunamis.** Discover a geologic force capable of generating skyscraper-sized waves. Huge landslides create these walls of water. The next one might send a monster wave across the Atlantic and straight for the East Coast of the United States. Feb. 3, 12:00Noon. **America's Volcanoes: Sitting on a Powder Keg: Mount St. Helens.** On May 18th, 1980 the most active volcano in the continental United States exploded. Journey into the past to experience one of nature's most memorable natural disasters and find out whether recent activity means another explosion is in the near future. Feb. 3, 1:00PM; Feb. 25, 7:00PM, 11:00PM. **Before the Dinosaurs.** Welcome to Earth -- before the dinosaurs. The creatures may look strange, but they mark the beginning of life as we know it.

Learn how some of the characteristics that helped them survive millions of years ago make humans what they are today. Feb. 12, 4:00PM; Feb. 25, 5:00PM. **Walking with Prehistoric Beasts: The New Dawn.** Follow 24 hours in the life of a female Leptictidium, a small hopping insectivore, as she endeavors to keep her offspring safe from the dangers of the forest. The Leptictidium mother protects her young from giant birds and walking whales waiting in ambush. Feb. 12, 6:00PM. **Walking with Prehistoric Beasts: Land of the Giants.** The giant forests have started to open up and the wide open spaces have allowed mammals to evolve into much larger forms. But size isn't everything. Follow the early years of a young Indricothere as it encounters predators. Feb. 12, 7:00PM, 11:00PM. **Walking with Prehistoric Beasts: Mammoth Journey.** When South America eventually joins up with its northern neighbor, clashes between the two ecosystems are bound to occur. The native giant ground sloths and giant terror birds are joined by the incoming Smilodon, the largest of all the sabre-toothed cats. Feb. 12, 8:00PM, 12:00Mid.; Feb. 25, 9:00AM. **Walking with Cavemen.** Real cavemen's lives were nasty, brutish and short. Yet somehow, they managed to shape-shift into the most successful species ever known - Homo Sapiens. Alec Baldwin hosts this look at 3.5 million years of human evolution. Feb. 12, 9:00PM, 1:00AM. **Dinosaur Planet: White Tip's Journey.** When White Tip loses the rest of her pack, she must struggle to survive on her own. In time, she locates a new pack, as well as a mate, only to find that her hardships are just beginning in the harsh desert environment. Christian Slater narrates. Feb. 25, 1:00PM. **Dinosaur Planet: Little Das' Hunt.** As a young male, it's Das' job to herd unsuspecting prey towards the rest of the pack. But he's easily distracted and ruins several hunts getting him in deep trouble with his mother, the pack leader. When a volcano threatens, the dinosaurs are unprepared. Feb. 25, 2:00PM. **Dinosaur Planet: Pod's Travels.** Pod is alone in the world after his sisters die in a tidal wave that sweeps him out to sea. After landing on an island populated with dwarf-sized dinosaurs, Pod discovers that he's become the apex predator. But, Pod learns it's lonely at the top. Feb. 25, 3:00PM. **Dinosaur Planet: Alpha's Egg.** The world is a very dangerous place for tiny hatchlings like Alpha, a female saltasaur. Follow Alpha along the road of her growth years, from before her birth through adolescence and on to adulthood, as she learns how to survive and beat the odds. Feb. 25, 4:00PM.

TLC: Nothing rock-related this month.

Travel Channel: Top Ten Wonders of the West. Each year, visitors flock to the deserts, coasts and mountains to climb on, hike over and kayak across the wonders that abound in the West. From Yellowstone National Park to Yosemite and beyond, capture the region's most awe-inspiring features. Feb. 7, 10:00 PM, 1:00 AM; Feb. 11, 3:00PM. **World's Best Lost Treasures.** Grab a shovel and a sense of adventure and head out to unearth the world's lost treasures! From shipwreck loot sunk into the sand to the greatest unsolved heists in history, join professional treasure hunters hot on the trail. Feb. 19, 7:00PM, 2:00AM. **America's Best Places to find Cash and Treasures.** In Arkansas, diamonds can be found on the eroded surface of a volcanic pipe. Sports cars and jewelry are on the block at the Department of the Treasury's auction in Los Angeles; and in Key West, a company combs the sea bottom for sunken treasure. Feb. 19, 8:00PM, 11:00PM. **America's Best Places to Find Cash & Treasures – 2.** Travel the country in search of hidden riches, from precious emerald digs in North Carolina to gold claims in California. In northern Wisconsin, join the search for John Dillinger's missing suitcase, filled with cash. Feb. 19, 9:00PM, 12:00Mid. **America's Best Places to Find Cash & Treasures – 3.** In Beverly Hills, explore exclusive pawnshops where visitors can buy diamonds, Rolls-Royces, and even an Emmy Award for rock bottom prices. Dig for rubies in North Carolina, and in Washington state, hunt for the missing loot of DB Cooper. Feb. 19, 10:00PM, 1:00AM. **Secrets of Hawaii's National Parks.** Discover a land where the pyrotechnics of earth-in-the-making meets tropical paradise. At the edge of an active volcano, retrieve a lava sample, follow a flow as it strikes the sea, and marvel at a black sand beach where giant sea turtles bask in the sun. Feb. 20, 3:00PM. **Secrets of Zion & Bryce.** In Southwestern Utah, two of America's National Parks are spectacularly different yet equally awe-inspiring. Experience the mysterious labyrinths of twisted rock and the highest sheer cliff walls in North America. Feb. 20, 4:00PM.

History Channel: Wild West Tech: Biggest Machines in the West. In this episode, we find out that size did matter in the Old West, where cowboys wanted big toys! Big profits required big equipment to dig, dredge, paddle, and plough through the wilds of America. Technology would replace the pan and the pick with massive machines roaming the forests and deserts like dinosaurs, feeding on the minerals above and below the soil. Even weaponry was super-sized! We take a look at the huge and deadly Hotchkiss cannon and the cumbersome Colt Buntline Revolver, carried by famous frontier personalities like Wyatt Earp, Frank and Jesse James, and Judge Roy Bean. And we review the history of the infamous Mankato Gallows, built to execute 38 Dakota warriors at the same time on December 26, 1862 in Minnesota--the largest mass execution in US history. Hosted by David Carradine. Feb. 8, 12:00Noon, 6:00PM. **The Lost Dinosaurs of Egypt.** A group of American paleontologists set out on a real-life "Indiana Jones" adventure and unearth what is now recognized as a new species of dinosaur--*Paralititan stromeri*--and our cameras are there to

document every step of the 7-week expedition through sandstorms and the blazing hot sun of the Sahara Desert. One of the most significant finds in the history of dinosaur science, we document every step of the University of Pennsylvania expedition. Feb. 17, 10:00AM, 4:00PM.

Upcoming Shows in the area:

Of course, THE place to be from January 27 through February 12 is TUCSON, ARIZONA!! And, of course, most of *us* will NOT be there. And the show season around here – at least within easy day-trip range – is pretty slow until spring. But here are some things to think about if you like to plan ahead, or are desperate enough to drive further:

Feb. 25-26, Albany, NY - New York State Academy of Mineralogy and the Capital District Mineral Club. 13th Annual James Campbell Memorial Gem, Mineral, and Fossil Show/Sale. New York State Museum, Empire State Plaza, Madison Ave. Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; admission \$5; includes the New York in Bloom Flower Show; contact Mike Hawkins, 518-486-2011, 518-473-7154, mhawkins@mail.nysed.gov.

Mar. 10-12, Columbus, OH - International Gem & Jewelry Show, Inc. Veterans Memorial. 301-294-1640, fax 301-294-0034, info@intergem.net, www.intergem.com.

Mar. 25-26, Sayre, PA - Che-Hanna Rock & Mineral Club. 37th Annual Show. Athens Township Volunteer Fire Hall, 150 Herrick Ave. Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$2, students \$1, kids under 8 free; cabochon making, geode cutting, and gemstone faceting demonstrations, fluorescent demonstration by UVBob, kids' mini mine, door prizes, exhibits, outstanding dealers, special exhibit and silent auction from Carnegie Mineral Museum; contact Hazel Remaley, 570-888-7544, northridge@infoblvd.net.

Apr. 1-2, Hamburg, NY - Show, "Fool's Gold — Not the Real Thing; Buffalo Geological Society; Fairgrounds, Grange/Market Bldgs., S. Park Ave.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$5, children 12 and under free; educational displays, mini-mine; contact Robert J. Hoffman, 65 Cheekwood Dr., Cheektowaga, NY 14227, (716) 656-8475.

Apr. 7-9, Berea, OH - GEMSTREET USA. Gem, Mineral, Jewelry, Fossil, and Bead Show. Cuyahoga County Fairgrounds, Bagley Rd. Entrance. 7th, 11-7; 8th, 10-6; 9th, 11-5. Strieter Productions, Inc., Jane Strieter-Smith, 216-521-GEMS, spi@stratos.net, www.gemstreetusa.com.

Apr. 14-16, Cleveland, OH - International Gem & Jewelry Show, Inc. I-X Center. 301-294-1640, fax 301-294-0034, info@intergem.net, www.intergem.com.

Apr. 21-23, Ft. Washington, PA - Jewelry Arts Expo. Held in conjunction with the new Gem and Mineral Market. Ft. Washington Expo Center, 1100 Virginia Dr. 21st, 11-7; 22nd, 10-6; 23rd, 10-5. *Lapidary Journal* and *Step by Step Beads*, 610-232-5700, lapidary.journal@primedia.com, www.lapidaryjournal.com.

Apr. 22-23, Cleveland, OH - Intergalactic Bead & Jewelry Shows. Cuyahoga Fairgrounds, Arts & Crafts Bldg., 19000 Bagley Rd. 10-5 daily. 888-729-6904, ibs@beadshows.com, www.beadshows.com.

Apr. 22-23, Cuyahoga Falls, OH - Show and sale; Summit Lapidary Club, Akron Mineral Society; Emidio & Sons Expo Center, 48 E. Bath Rd.; Sat. 10-7, Sun. 10-6; minerals, rocks, gems, jewelry; contact Warren Salchak, (330) 929-3798, or Carl Miller, (330) 633-4250; Web site: www.LapidaryClubofOhio.org.

Apr. 28-30, Pittsburgh, PA - International Gem & Jewelry Show, Inc. Pittsburgh ExpoMart. 301-294-1640, fax 301-294-0034, info@intergem.net, www.intergem.com.

Of course, there will be more shows this time of year in warmer climates – so if you're planning to travel, be sure to check out the complete online listings at the Rock and Gem Magazine Calendar (<http://www.rockngem.com/showdates/showdates.shtml>), and the Lapidary Journal Calendar (<http://www.lapidaryjournal.com/cal1.cfm>). Note that while 90% or better of these listings are exactly the same, if you only check one, you could miss one in the 10% that *aren't* in both that's just the one you wanted!

We have been down in the club room many Saturday mornings (which sometimes extend to 2:00-3:00PM), but **check the club web site** at www.treebeard.net/gemcity or call and find out if you would like to join us for any *particular* Saturday. The web site is usually updated with a 'definite' status Friday night or early Saturday morning -- or call me (Harriet) at 455-4851 or Bob Gallivan at 454-6770 to make sure. You can also call to arrange another time for a work session if Saturdays aren't good for you, and someone will try to accommodate you.