



# The Cutting Edge

Monthly Newsletter of the Ottawa Lapsmith and Mineral Club

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## President's Message

As of this writing we will be taking possession of our new workshop space on or about Dec 01. The game plan is to spend the first three weeks building furniture and stringing electrical cable followed by a big move the weekend of December 21-22. Then after we will try to get the workshop organized for an early January opening. Anyone willing to lend a hand should contact Jean-Guy (workshopchair).

We will need supervisors in early January. Anyone willing to volunteer should once again contact Jean-Guy.

There will be no Christmas party this year but an opening party is very possible.

Kerry Day  
OLMC President

Member Chair Nathalie Bourget reminds everyone that the membership period for 2024 comes to an end on December 31<sup>st</sup>. Members have until January 31<sup>st</sup> 2025, to renew for the whole year. It is still \$20 for a single membership that gets you access to the workshop, training offered through the club, invites to field trips and other club events, and ten newsletters. Membership cards will be mailed as soon as the Canada Post strike ends.

Through December, Workshop Chair Jean-Guy Bradette will lead the preparation of the workshop – electrical circuits, water, furniture. Vice-President Matthew Poirier is lending his tools and expertise. Anyone who wants to help, it would be really appreciated. Contact Jean-Guy at [workshop@olm.ca](mailto:workshop@olm.ca).

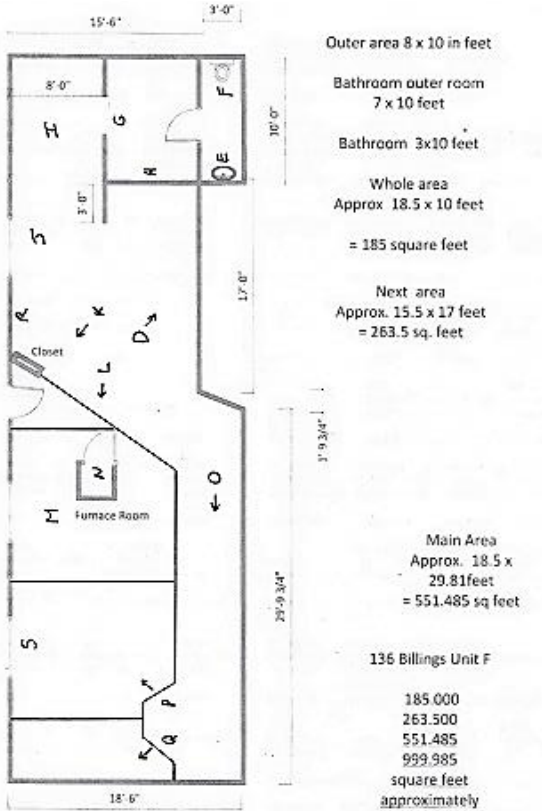
All members are invited to submit articles, proposals, and thoughts that could be included in the newsletters. Also, feel free to send your Classified ads by e-mail to: [news@olmc.ca](mailto:news@olmc.ca)

# More Photos from the New Studio

On November 13, President Kerry Day, Workshop Chair Jean-Guy Bradette, Logistics Lead Calvin Jones visited 136F Billings. The demolition crew is late and the unit is still as the previous tenant left it. Photos and captions were provided by Kerry Day. Letters on the photos correspond with letters on the floor plan.



*L: We decided to keep the furniture the previous tenant left behind. This is a view of the front entrance from behind the front desk, which will be removed to make room for the silversmiths.*

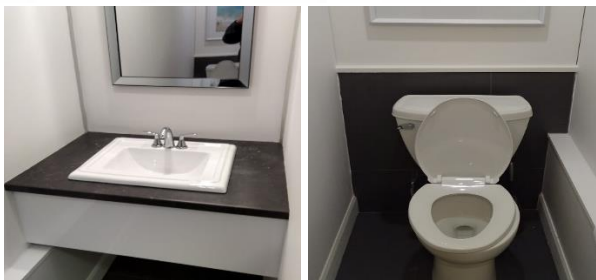


Please Note: door, closet, windows and furnace room near front door area are rough location estimations. Calvin Jones



*H/I: Area behind the reception desk (photo D), next to the kitchen*

*Below left: E & F: Washroom; Below G: Kitchen*





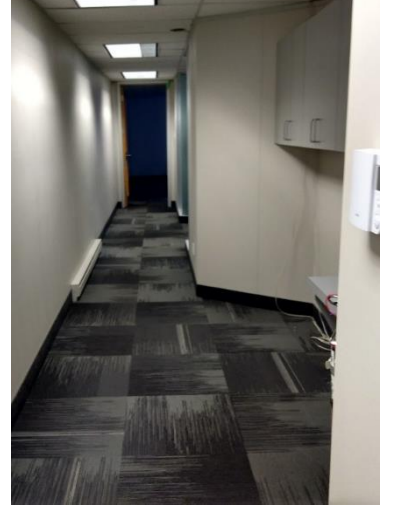
*K: The landlord has recommended that we get rid of the AC unit. Kerry would like to move it the other end of the unit.*



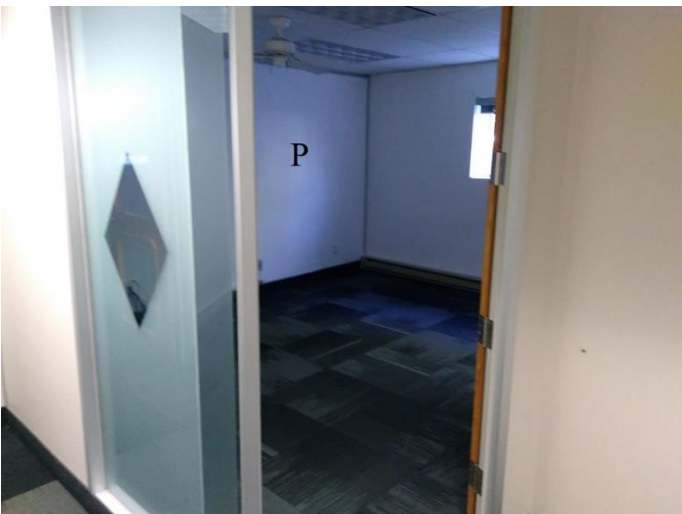
*L: Another view of the studio entrance. The front entrance way is getting demolished.*



*M: This will be the saw room and secure storage.*



*N & O: The gas furnace will remain as is.*



*P & Q: The two rooms will be merged to form one big open area. Our electrical can be attached to the outside of the walls. All of the windows open, and they face north.*

## Member Profile: John Lavoie



*Above: John Lavoie has been an OLMC member for twelve years. This photo is from the 2024 gem show, where he demonstrated faceting.*

I've been with the club for twelve years. Previous to that, I lived in British Columbia, and I did a lot of searching for gold and panning of gold, and searching for garnets and agates, and these types of things. Then, I moved to Ontario, so my time couldn't be spent in the woods panning gold.

I started looking at ways to cut some of the stones that I'd found, and that's how I found you guys. The first day when I walked into the club, I met Jean-Guy. I had a big ring on my finger with a big ruby in it. He's like, "What are you interested to learn", and I said, "How do I do this?" So, Jean-Guy taught me the basics of how to use a faceting machine. Then I bought a faceting machine from Jean-Guy. Since then, I seem to have a natural ability to be able to facet stones, and it's quite fun.

When you're learning to cut stone, you don't want to cut a sapphire or something difficult. The very first stone I ever cut was this topaz, and I wish the polish was a little bit better, but I always bring it around with me when I'm doing this kind of stuff to remind me of where I

started and where I've gotten to over time. Pattern really comes down to the size of the stone, natural shape of the stone. I look at it and try to keep as much of the material there as I can while still maintaining cutting a clear, nice stone.

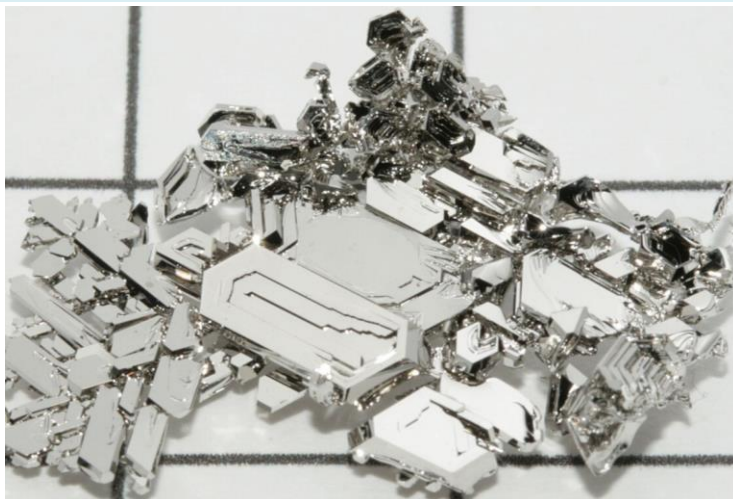
I've cut some jade for one of the club members. I faceted a few stones. I've replaced stones in rings that people have lost. It's more of a hobby for me than a business, but I enjoy doing it. I'm like a pirate. I have a big bag of jewels, and I just hoard them all. I've purchased a few collections over the years. It happens quite a lot. It's the best way to purchase stones, in my opinion. You find that one out of the whole bag that makes the purchase worth it.

I worked with Karl Schutt a little bit. He made me a bunch of these dop sticks for this machine. And I purchased quite a bit of rough material from him, some of which is in the case, like this colour change flourite. He was very good and full of information.

What is my favourite stone that I've cut? They all hold a lot of beauty. Some of them are very different than other ones. If you cut a star sapphire and you get the rays looking nice, it's as beautiful as going out with the club to dig up amazonite and then cabbing it. I like them all.

## Platinum: “Little Silver” Metal

Platinum (Pt) is a rare and precious silver-white metal that is dense, malleable, highly unreactive element. A few hundred tonnes are produced annually, of which around 80% comes from South Africa and 13% from Russia. The chemical stability and resistance to tarnishing make it useful in industrial applications like catalytic converters, electrical contacts, dentistry equipment, glass making, and jewellery.



*Platinum crystal; Photo by By Periodictableru - Own work, CC BY 3.0, [Wikipedia](#)*

At first glance, this lustrous metal might be confused with silver.

Platinum has a Mohs hardness of 3.5, a melting point of 1768.3 °C and a room-temperature density of 21.452 g/cm, so it is harder, heavier, and much harder to melt than silver.

Being so unreactive, platinum typically just binds to other platinum. It can be found in the alluvial sands of certain rivers. It occurs in some nickel and copper ores along with some native deposits. Platinum has been found on the Moon and in meteorites, and if a meteor hits the ground with enough force to cause some volcanism, there can be a slightly higher quantity of platinum in the area. The Sudbury Basin is an example of such an impact.

Traces of platinum were found in the gold used by ancient Egyptians. The La Tolita Culture (c. 600 BCE – 200 CE) in modern-day Ecuador used a white gold-platinum alloy for some of their artifacts. In 1557, Europeans made references to platinum as an unknown metal that they could not melt. It was seen as an undesirable impurity of gold and thrown away. It was not until Antonio de Ulloa published a report in 1748 on a new metal of Colombian origin that it began to be investigated by scientists.



*Platinum nugget; By Alchemist-hp (talk) (www.pse-mendelejew.de) - Own work, FAL, [Wikipedia](#)*

In 1786, Pierre-François Chabaneau received a library and laboratory funded by Charles III of Spain to research platinum. Chabaneau managed to remove various impurities from the ore, including gold, mercury, lead, copper, and iron. But his samples still contained undiscovered platinum-group metals. This led to inconsistent results in his experiments. At times, the platinum seemed malleable, but when it was alloyed with iridium, it would be much more brittle. Sometimes the metal was entirely incombustible, but when alloyed with osmium, it would volatilize (evaporate). After several months of hammering and compressing the sponge form while white-hot, he produced 23 kilograms of pure, malleable platinum.

## For Sale: A lot of stuff

Contact: Craig Johnson 613-266-0028. A 30-inch vibrating flat lap, a small trim saw, a 10-inch older model saw. a lot of 6-inch flat laps, several 10-inch saw blades, a faceting machine, drawers of findings and beads and tools, scales, etc. He also has three 6-foot long wooden cabinets each with 36 small drawers. Below: photos of a cabinet and the vibrating lap.



## ... and another Sale: Tumblers!

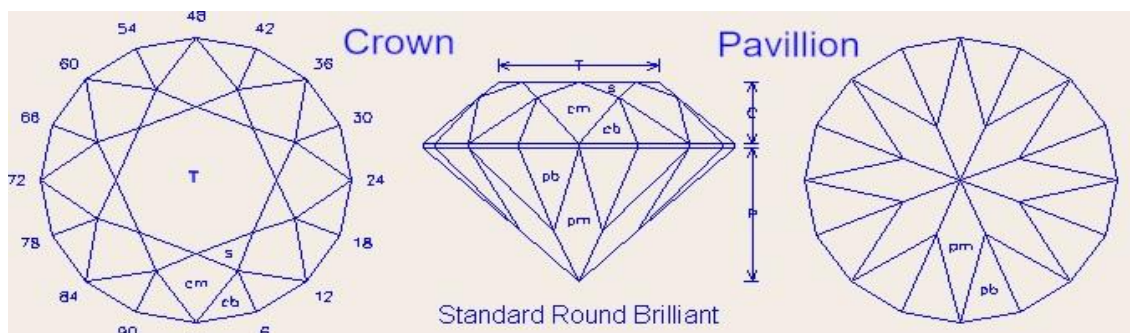
2.12 lb tumbler, 1.6 lb tumbler, 1.4 lb tumbler, large quantity of grit. Call 613-821-2067

## Gem Facet Design: Standard Brilliant

The Standard Brilliant eight-fold design provides maximum brilliance for a shallow round gemstone. It is often used with colourless materials of medium to high refractive index (RI) such as quartz, apatite, corundum, cubic zirconia. Light to medium colours still work well, and so do dark colours for material with a very high refractive index.

This cut starts losing its attractiveness in stones over fifteen millimeters in width. Low RI materials work well at twelve millimeters and below. Medium RI gem materials might work well in sizes up to twenty millimeters. So, the fifteen-millimeter limit is a good average measure.

There are ten and twelve-fold design variations that add scintillation without increasing stone depth. From Diagrams for Faceting, Volume 1 (Revised), Glenn & Martha Vargas



## Family Fight over the Idol's Eye

Members of the Qatari Al-Thani dynasty are arguing over who among them should own the Idol's Eye, a 70-carat free-form faceted blue diamond. The family has owned the stone since the early 2000s, when it was bought by Qatari culture minister Sheikh Saoud bin Mohammed Ali Al-Thani. He died in 2014, but not before loaning it to an investment company owned by his relative Sheikh Hamad bin Abdullah Al Thani.

The investment company claims that part of the loan agreement gives them the right to buy the stone for US \$10 million, backed up by a letter written in 2020, from the company handling the estate of the widow and children of the late Sheikh Saoud. Other members of the family say the stone is worth more than US \$25 million, and that the letter from the estate should be disregarded.

The litigation goes onward.

The Idol's Eye was found in 1600 in the Golconda Sultanate in southern India. Over the years it has been bought and sold between wealthy individuals. The original owner may have been a Prince Rahab of Persia (editor's note: probably not the person's real name), who sold it to pay debts. The diamond does not appear again until it is purchased by Ottoman sultan Abdul Hamid II at a Christie's auction on July 14, 1865.

After the Turkish Nationalist revolution ended in the summer of 1923, the exiled Abdul Hamid II left for Paris, including a package of some of the imperial jewels. Apparently, a servant stole the gems and sold them. Eventually, the Idol's Eye was acquired by a Spanish aristocrat, who sold it to American jeweller Harry Winston after World War II. American philanthropist May Bonfils Stanton bought it, but after her death in 1962, Chicago jeweller Harry Levinson bought it at auction for US \$375,000.

<https://metro.co.uk/2024/11/18/billionaire-family-feud-21-000-000-17th-century-diamond-high-court-22013764>



*The Idol's Eye diamond; photo courtesy of Champion News via /www.telegraph.co.uk*

## Armed gang takes jewels from Hiéron Museum

Four thieves on motorbikes fired shots and took parts of 1904 work by goldsmith Joseph Chaumet from Hiéron Museum in Paray-le-Monial, France, on the afternoon of November 21.

They went straight to the museum's main exhibit, a 3-metre (10ft) work known as "Via Vitae", depicting the life of Christ in precious metals, jewels, and ivory, made by the famed Parisian goldsmith Joseph Chaumet in 1904.

The estimated value of the complete work of 138 figures encrusted with diamonds and rubies set in marble of various shades, and alabaster, is about US \$7.2 million.

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The thieves used a power tool to saw through armoured glass protecting the piece. They took gold and ivory figurines, and emerald decorations. As they fled, the gang sowed spikes across the road to hobble two pursuing vehicles, police said.

The Hiéron Museum has been targeted by thieves before. Two gold crowns were stolen in 2017. There was another attempted robbery in 2022.

The day before this latest incident, the Cognacq-Jay Museum in Paris, was victimized in broad daylight. Thieves broke into a display case with axes and baseball bats while visitors and staff watched, and took several precious objects including ornate snuffboxes.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/nov/22/armed-gang-steal-jewels-worth-millions-from-french-museum>

Five Ways to Split a Geode by Rockhunter Mark (11:41)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bww5L6\\_eGqI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bww5L6_eGqI)  
 Tile Saw, Sledge Hammer, Block Splitter, Concrete Saw,  
 Soil Pipe Cutter

<b>Workshop Schedule</b>						
<b>December 2024</b>						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 	23	24	25 	26 	27	28
29	30	31 				





# OLMC Membership Application

New Membership  Membership Renewal

Individual **\$20**

Family (2+ persons in the same residence) **\$30**

**Benefits:**

Monthly Newsletter

Newsletter advertisement: \$25 per year for members or \$55 for businesses

*(Ten quarter pages per year over ten newsletters).*

OLMC online auctions

OLMC field trips

*More information can be found at <http://www.olmc.ca>  
You can also go on our Facebook page: [OttawaLapsmithandmineralclub](#)*

Names(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please specify your e-mail address to receive OLMC's newsletter:

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you require a receipt?

Yes

Payments are payable by **cash, cheque** to Ottawa Lapsmith and Mineral Club, or  
**E Transfer** at [treasurer@olmc.ca](mailto:treasurer@olmc.ca) with the application form

Please mail your membership form and fees to:

Ottawa Lapsmith and Mineral Club  
P. O. Box 36042 Wellington, Ottawa, On K1Y

4V3

*Please note that all membership information is used only for administrative purposes.*

Administration use only

Card provided:  Yes  No

Supervisor signed:  Yes  No

Date: \_\_\_\_\_