

USFG ANNOUNCES A SINGLE-STONE COMPETITION® AND A WORLD CLASS FACETER® TRAINING PROGRAM

The September issue of this newsletter referenced the **WORLD CLASS FACETER** program that the USFG is in the process on initiating (See the **Introductory Comments** in the article **A New Approach To Competition Judging** in the September issue). This current article describes the **WORLD CLASS FACETER** program in more detail and explains its relationship to the USFG's **SINGLE-STONE COMPETITION** program, also being introduced in this issue. Although the two programs have different **short-term rewards** for the participant, both are designed to produce faceters who can successfully compete in world class competitions.

SINGLE-STONE COMPETITION PROGRAM



Although the overall mission of the two programs is to produce faceters that can successfully compete in the "Australian Olympics," the **SINGLE-STONE COMPETITION** program is designed to accommodate faceters with current skills at the **NOVICE**, **ADVANCED**, or **MASTERS** categories. The **SINGLE-STONE COMPETITION** program, with **NOVICE**, **ADVANCED** and **MASTERS** categories, will be conducted as a typical single stone competition in which winners of the categories will be recognized and presented with awards (Note: these awards will acknowledge that the stone was judged according to world class standards). The **SINGLE-STONE COMPETITION** has three primary purposes related to the **WORLD CLASS FACETER** program: (1) To provide interested Guild members with a convenient and familiar format to become involved in improving their faceting skills; (2) To provide the participant with an initial measure of his/her faceting skill as evaluated by world class judging criteria and world class judges; and (3) To provide the USFG's **PANEL OF EXAMINERS** with a field of candidates from which to identify potential participants for the **WORLD CLASS FACETER** program. Thus, the single-stone competition is the "stepping stone" for entry into the

WORLD CLASS FACETER program. As currently planned, a number of the top scorers in each category of the **SINGLE-STONE COMPETITION** program will be offered the opportunity (and indeed encouraged) to participate in the **WORLD CLASS FACETER** program. But winners or high scorers in the **SINGLE-STONE COMPETITION** are under no obligation to move into the **WORLD CLASS FACETER** program.

HOWEVER, ALL PARTICIPANTS IN THE WORLD CLASS FACETER PROGRAM ARE REQUIRED TO QUALIFY BY ENTERING STONES IN THE SINGLE-STONE COMPETITION PROGRAM.

Participants in the **SINGLE-STONE COMPETITION** should carefully consider the category most appropriate for their current skills. By entering a category in which the cutting difficulty exceeds the participant's cutting skill, the resulting score may position the participant below a "cut-off score" that will be the minimum score for acceptance into the **WORLD CLASS FACETER** program.

It is recommended that participants who have placed in the **high 90's** in the **ADVANCED** or **MASTERS** categories in local or regional competitions enter one or the other of the same categories, primarily because their skills will probably be commensurate with the designs required for these categories. However, participants are free to enter the category of their choice. A participant may enter only **ONE** of the three categories.

Since the USFG wishes to accommodate all faceters regardless of their current skill level, all beginning faceters, whether or not having won or placed high in the **NOVICE** category in a local or regional competition, are encouraged to enter the **NOVICE** category.

It is important to take special note of the second item in the foregoing three purposes of the **SINGLE-STONE COMPETITION**, i.e., **the judging will be maintained at the world class level**, which in everyday terms means that the judges will be extraordinarily **picky**. This feature is likely to result in markedly different stone scores than some competitors have previously experienced, but should not be considered a deterrent for participants. There will still be top scorers in all three categories in the **SINGLE-STONE COMPETITION**; however, the highest scorer in each category will be recognized and awarded a trophy. Actually, it can be considered that there will be multiple winners in each category because of the opportunity provided to advance into the **WORLD CLASS FACETER** program.

It must be stressed that submitting a stone in any one of the **SINGLE-STONE COMPETITION** categories will not necessarily restrict a **WORLD CLASS FACETER** trainee's cutting efforts to stones in that category of difficulty. The single-

USFG ANNOUNCES

stone competition categories are only an aid which the **PANEL OF EXAMINERS** will use to determine which level of design-difficulty will be suggested for the trainees that advance to the **WORLD CLASS FACETER** program. (More on this in a following section).

STONE REQUIREMENTS

Patterns for three categories (as diagramed on pages 11, 12 and 13) are:

NOVICE: DART. Material to be quartz, clear or any color.

ADVANCED: FOUR SPOT. Material to be quartz, clear or any color.

MASTERS: EAGLE EYE. Material to be topaz, clear or any color.

STONE WIDTH for all categories is to be from **10 to 14mm**.

LENGTH/WIDTH ratio for all categories to be within **plus or minus 0.1mm**.

SHIPPING AND HANDLING

1. Place the stone in a round plastic gemstone display cup with foam insert and cap.
2. Place the following in a bubble-protected envelope:

The display cup containing the stone;

A bubble-protected self-addressed and stamped envelope (For returning the stone to the cutter);

A \$20 check or money order made out to Charles L. Moon (entry fee).

3. Mail the package to:

Charles L. Moon
155 Myrtle Ct.
Arcata, CA 95521-6511

4. At the participant's discretion, packages should be sent by certified mail and/or insured.
5. Stones will be returned to the participant in the manner selected by the participant as in 4 above.

6. THE POSTMARK DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING INITIAL STONES IS JUNE 20, 2000.

Mr. Moon will code the stone (for anonymity), repack and send to a selected judge. The judged stone and comprehensive "mark-up sheet" will be returned to Mr. Moon who will decode, repackage the stone with score sheet and return to the individual contestant.

WORLD CLASS FACETER PROGRAM

The **WORLD CLASS FACETER** program has one goal for its participants: to prepare the participant to successfully participate in the Australian International Faceting Competition. The USFG considers that goal to be achievable by participants who the Guild's **PANEL OF EXAMINERS** certify as having achieved **WORLD CLASS FACETER** skills. The program is intended to be an exercise in which the **WORLD CLASS FACETER** trainee will participate in a series of "stone cutting/stone evaluation" cycles which will be designed to develop the trainee's faceting skill to a level that produces world class competition stones. The program's procedures, judging rules, judging expertise, and skill-improvement guidance will operate under the auspices of several USFG members (i.e., **PANEL OF EXAMINERS**) who have competed in the biannual Australian world class faceting competitions and thus have first-hand knowledge and expectations for "coaching" faceters to achieve world class perfection.

However, the program is not designed to advance a student's faceting-skills stepwise through the traditional faceting-skill categories (i.e., novice, intermediate, advanced, masters). Rather, as stated in the September USFG Newsletter, the only skill level to be achieved by a student is certification as a **WORLD CLASS FACETER**. Thus, whether a student's cutting skills are currently at the **NOVICE, ADVANCED** or **MASTERS** level, the student can advance to **WORLD CLASS FACETER** certification as quickly as his/her skills develop to that level. There is no specific number of stones that a student will be offered to cut. Neither is there a "skill-achievement" time-limit deadline that a student should adhere to. The step-wise cutting sequence of increasing design difficulty will be entirely under the control and advice of the Guild's world class **PANEL OF EXAMINERS**. The general sequence of training will be as follows:

1. The **PANEL OF EXAMINERS** will assign a trainee a stone design to be cut (the initial design difficulty will be based on the quality and design difficulty of the trainee's submission in the **SINGLE-STONE COMPETITION**).
2. The trainee will cut the stone and send it to the "panel."
3. The "panel" will:
 - A. Evaluate the technical quality of the stone;
 - B. Return the stone to the trainee with a detailed critique

USFG ANNOUNCES

of cutting-skill improvements that are needed;

C. Supply the trainee with a new stone design to be cut.

Although the program is designed to advise the student on faceting skills that need improvement, the standard to which all stones will be compared is a world class level score of **99**. This stone-score is demanding, but **99** is the minimum technical level that a stone must exhibit to be competitive in the Australian competitions. However, it must be stressed that initial skill levels which fall short of this world class level of perfection will not be adversely or non-benevolently viewed by the **PANEL OF EXAMINERS**. Rather, it is the **progress** of technical quality in the stones that the panel will be evaluating.

The **WORLD CLASS FACETER** training will be conducted as a "private assessment" program under the guidance of a **PANEL OF EXAMINERS** as described in the December 1998 issue of this newsletter. The following is an excerpt of the pertinent parts from the "private assessment" article:

The core of this **PRIVATE STONE ASSESSMENT** program is a procedure wherein stones are sent to qualified faceters who will examine the stones within the format of features that are specified in the USFG's newly promulgated rules for judging competition stones. But the conclusions of the examination will not be based on the traditional numerical scoring of competitions. Rather, the conclusions will be documented in a "mark-up" sheet with detailed comments which will clearly indicate those features of the stone that require improved skills. In this manner, the faceter is not faced with a numerical score and cursory verbiage that conveys little or no information on the specific faceting skills that need to be improved. Furthermore, the "non-competition" environment in which the assessment will be conducted is just what the title implies, private, and thus removes, for the most part, any fear that the stone will cause some assault on pride-of-accomplishment. The program is a one-on-one arrangement but with complete anonymity between the faceter and the examiner.

The following is a excerpt of the pertinent parts from the **PANEL OF EXAMINERS** article:

The USFG BOARD OF DIRECTORS takes great pleasure in announcing the creation of a **PANEL OF EXAMINERS** and the appointment of a blue-ribbon group of the Guild's members to that panel. The **PANEL OF EXAMINERS** establishes the cornerstone of the Guild's new program to increase the

faceting skills of its members by providing a forum for the **PRIVATE STONE ASSESSMENT** of their faceting skills.

The **PANEL OF EXAMINERS** is currently composed of nine members, who, listed in alphabetical order are: Paul Ahlstedt, Jim Ball, Walter Carss, Charles Covill, Don Dunn, Ewing Evans, Glenn Klein, Ralph Mathewson, Jill Rowland.

The achievements of this group of individuals in the arena of competition faceting clearly justifies the Board in referring to them as a Blue-ribbon panel that is eminently qualified to perform the judging responsibilities of the private stone assessment program.

Six of these examiners have distinguished themselves as winners in the International Faceting Challenge (The Australian Olympics of Faceting), not just once but many times during the past five bi-annual competitions from 1990 through 1998. These six, plus the other examiners were winners in every possible USA competition whether the competition was a Guild or Professional (AGTA) competition. Everyone of these evaluators have published their own designs; one person is a well known designer. All of the examiners are teachers of faceting and all have been evaluators in past Guild competitions in the USA. To have one of your stones assessed by any one of these evaluators will truly be an outstanding learning experience.

The names of trainees who have been selected for the **WORLD CLASS FACETER** program will be announced in the first newsletter issue published after the judging in the **SINGLE-STONE COMPETITION** is completed. The training program will also begin at that time and procedures for the training program will be detailed.

FUTURE COMPETITION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

As currently planned, the USFG will conduct a **SINGLE STONE COMPETITION** and start a new **WORLD CLASS TRAINING** group each year. New members of the USFG or those who do not enter the current competition will thus have the opportunity to enter the competition and compete for a position in the **WORLD CLASS FACETER** program.