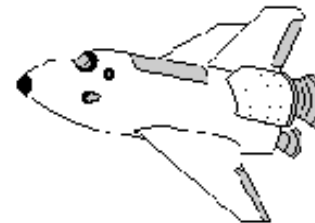
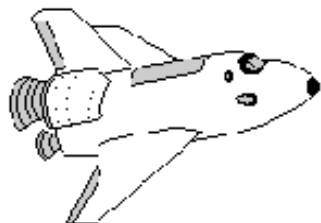


# ROCKET CITY ROCKS & GEMS



*The Monthly News Bulletin of the Huntsville Gem & Mineral Society, Huntsville, Alabama*

Volume 49 No. 3

*"We'll go to the Moon for a Rock"*

March 2017

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## March Program

### Bring Your Collection to the Meeting This time Families with Initials J-P



Bring up to 3 favorite items from your collection and be ready to tell what you have, and why they are special to you. There will be one more of these later for the remainder of the membership.



**The March Meeting will be in the  
Senior Center Merrimack Room**

Visit us at [www.huntsvillegms.org/](http://www.huntsvillegms.org/) and [www.facebook.com/HuntsvilleGMS](https://www.facebook.com/HuntsvilleGMS)



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## Minutes for the HGMS Meeting February 28, 2017

President Mike Harrison welcomed everyone at 6:40. He asked first time visitors to select a first-time visitor rock. Next month we will tentatively meet at the Community Center and park in the North parking lot. Bill Friday said we had run out of space in the Merrimack room. So the HGMS club is meeting at the community center. We have to reserve the community center. The community center can be reserved for \$45 a month.

The next item on agenda was the treasurer's report. Our balance is lower than it has been in years at \$697. Everything has been accounted for this month.

The Jewelry Club report was next in the meeting. Leslie Malakowsky is Jewelry Club leader. She is out of town this week. For those who are certified in metal-smithing, this Thursday the jewelry club is doing a chemical etching class. There will be a bezel setting class, and then on April 6 will be an electro-etching class. In which you will be able to etch silver. The class is limited to ten. For all classes you must be jewelry certified.

The pebble pups class is run by Brian Burgess. We had 12 pups and a visitor plus at our last meeting. Brian has bought some kits with a magnifying glass and other equipment to identify rocks. He also bought rock identification and mineral identification guides. This class will be doing rock identification to mineral identification. Future meetings will be held on fourth Thursdays. Pebble pups starts at age 8 and is being extended from age 13 up through 15.

Next on the agenda was field trips. The only field trip is scheduled for June 2018 to the Hogg Mine at LaGrange GA. There is another Dixie Mineral Council field trip to Jackson, Mississippi in March 25—details in the Feb newsletter. There was a great deal of interest in doing a dig at Mason Mine in North Carolina.

Membership report was next. Bill Friday said membership dues are due. Last year we spent a lot of money on equipment. So we need to make up for that we need an auction. Bill is collecting membership dues. We have over 200 people listed as members in HGMS.

The annual HGMS auction will be April 17 at the Jaycees building on Airport Rd. We need an auction chair. The auction is the way we fund our equipment. Mike Harrison asked for volunteers.

The picnic is June 17th at Monte Sano Park. We will have a traditional rock swap and will also have a kids rock swap.

Science Olympiad is Saturday March 4. Volunteers are welcome. It will be in the Shelby Center at Univ. Alabama Huntsville from 8:30 till noon.

The mentoring program was brought up next, headed by Myra Soroczak. This mentoring program will match a mentor with a novice. If you are a novice you put your name under novice and chose your area of interest. Mentors will put down their name, phone number down, and area of expertise. When you sign this sheet the parties agree to meet once a month outside of the HGMS meeting.

There is a rock mosaic class being offered in Nauvoo AL on May 15-19. There is a sign up sheet at the HGMS meeting. For details see <http://www.alfolkschool.com/workshops/mosaics-in-alabama-rock>

This Saturday at Trinity Baptist Church is a craft show. HGMS members will have their work for exhibit and for sale.

John Messamore was our guest speaker on Chinese art culture, especially Jade. He is a student and collector of Jade and Chinese art, and he brought several very nice pieces for display. He has a master's degree in system management.

The meeting was adjourned for refreshments at 8:15.

**Recorded by Secretary Dorothea Chism**

## ANNUAL HGMS AUCTION

**All members are also encouraged to dig through your collection and pick out a few worthy items to donate for the April HGMS Auction, to be held April 28th in the Jaycees Bldg 2180 Airport Rd, Huntsville AL. Wayne Taylor will again be our Auctioneer, performing is amazing vocal art as our treasures go to new owners.**

### **Help from members is needed in several areas.**

Chair: Shelley Curran 256.426.4596 [curranshelley1@gmail.com](mailto:curranshelley1@gmail.com)

A phone call or text is the most reliable way to contact me.

Set Up: Saturday at 8:00am. Help is needed in moving the donations from storage to the auction site and arranging them, setting up the registration, bidding, and sales tracking areas.

Bid Tracking/ Excel recording. Kathy Bowman. Needs 2-3 helpers for backup.

Registration/ Paddle Table. Leslie Malakowski. Needs 1-2 helpers.

Cashiers. Need at least 3. At least one person needs to be familiar with the Square credit card reader

Sold Merchandise Holding table. Chris Kalange. Michael Cape. Need 1-2 helpers.

Runners. 3-4

Bid Spotters. 3-4

Presenters. Show the merchandise. 3-4

Catalog. Myra Soroczak

Valuation. Mike Soroczak. Bill Friday.

Clean Up. Saturday afternoon.

**Rocks, slabs, museum pieces, finished cabs, jewelry, metal work, mineral oddities, and equipment are all welcome.**



**Bring your donations to the Senior Center on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday evenings between 6:00 and 9:00, or on Wednesdays from 9:00 to 3:00. If you know what your items are, please provide a written description, as well as an estimate of the value of each piece. This will help preparation for the auction go much smoother. This is the main fund raiser for HGMS operations, so your support is appreciated and is very important to the Club.**

**And besides all of that, bring your checkbook and plan to take home some new treasures.**

## **Program for March 28th HGMS Meeting**

### **Sharing the Stones: Show and Tell No. 2**

At our January 24th meeting, several members brought up to 3 of their favorite rocks, slabs, cabs, or jewelry to a Show and Tell. Each person got to tell how they got the object, what it was (or asked the audience what it was), and explained why this piece was important to them. The format will be the same this time, for members whose last initial is J-P. By allowing each person who brings something to share a few minutes to show off each piece, the club gets to know each person better as well as to ooh and aah at their pretties. Later in the year we will have one more Show and Tell program where the remaining members will get their few minutes of fame.



## HGMS Jewelry Crafts By Mindy Schell

The Auction on 29 April is almost on us. Some of us feel for various reasons we cannot volunteer our time or do not have items to donate. I say we do! :) Mike Harrison has been generous enough to donate a good number of cabochons that can be made into jewelry. I humbly request if you are a HGMS member and jewelry artist to sign up to showcase one or two of these cabochons of various sizes and shapes and give back for the auction. Showcasing can involve wire-wrap, metal-smithing, etc. This is one way we can give back to HGMS and keep all of our lapidary, jewelry groups, Pebble Pups, and other outreach programs running.

If you are interested please contact me at [mindy.schell@yahoo.com](mailto:mindy.schell@yahoo.com) or sign up at our next HGMS meeting in March. Thank you.

## Rocket City Jewelers By Leslie Malakowsky

Hello everyone! Thank you for your patience while I was out of town. Mom is on the road to recovery and we look forward to her coming home soon.

In case you haven't heard, the Jewelry Activities Group is now the Rocket City Jewelers (RCJ). Our name has changed, but our core values remain the same; to inspire creativity, to share what we know, to learn new techniques and, most importantly, to have fun! We welcome folks at all skill levels from beginner to experienced. Unless otherwise noted, we will always meet the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday nights of the month from 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. in the Paint Room at the Huntsville Senior Center. We will usually have a class the first Tuesday night following the regular Tuesday night HGMS meeting. The next two Tuesday nights will usually be "Open Jewelry" or "Freeform" nights where you can practice the techniques from the current class or work on individual projects.

**April 4<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday) Findings Class-** So let's get started on our first class of 2017! This is your chance to meet fellow jewelry makers and to discuss class ideas! There will be a few surprises to entice you too so I'm hoping everyone will attend. We'll learn about basic jewelry findings such as jump rings, headpins and ear wires. No kit purchase is necessary. Please bring your own craft wire and tools. We have a limited number of sets of jewelry pliers and wire cutters. First come, first serve on signing out tools and members can share these. We'll also have samples of future class projects for you to preview, so please join us you April 4<sup>th</sup>. I am looking forward to seeing you.

**April 11<sup>th</sup>, April 18<sup>th</sup>, and May 2<sup>nd</sup>** - Open jewelry nights or "Free-form".

**April 25<sup>th</sup> - Reserved for the Auction Team** getting ready for the Auction on April 29<sup>th</sup>, our annual HGMS fund raising auction.

If you have an idea for a class or a project, please contact Leslie directly at 256-755-0479 or email [lmalakowsky@gmail.com](mailto:lmalakowsky@gmail.com).

## Metal Smithing/Silver Group By Kathy Bowman

**Thursday, April 6: Etching Part II – Electro Etching.** This is open to all who have completed certification. *The signup sheet will be available at the March HGMS meeting.* This is an alternate method of etching metal. It can be as simple as using salt water and 2 "D" size batteries to etch copper or brass or as complex as using a variable power supply and cupric nitrate to etch silver. Electro etching has the advantage of being repeatable from piece to piece and the etchant solution (except for salt water) is usable indefinitely and does not involve hazardous chemicals. The method of applying the "resist" to the metal is more involved than the methods used for chemical etching as Sharpie markers and stamp ink does not stand up to electro etching. I will not have a computer or laser printer available in this class to do custom designs so we will be using a variety of pre-printed designs on PnP paper as the resist. Kit cost is \$8.00.



**Thursday, May 4 : Inlaid Copper Bracelet**

The bracelet can be either a bangle or a cuff as shown. The same technique can be used to make earrings or inlaid ring bands. Kit cost TBD.

This will be open to Intermediate and Advanced only. *A sign-up sheet will be available at the **March** meeting.*

*Since there will be no regular HGMS meeting in April due to the Auction, students can also register via email to [mindy.schell@yahoo.com](mailto:mindy.schell@yahoo.com)*



Certified HGMS Members meet on Thursday nights from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Huntsville Senior Center in the Lapidary Room.

**Certification Classes** The second sign up for Lottery for metalsmithing certification classes will be at the May HGMS. In the event that more than 10 people sign up those who are not drawn for the first round will be scheduled for a 2<sup>nd</sup> class later this summer. The dates for this round of certifications are TBD. Additional information about the classes will be in the April newsletter.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> group of certification classes from the January lottery will be in May, The classes are tentatively scheduled for May 16 (Safety) and May 18 (Project). Those on the list for the class will be notified by telephone or email.

**Volunteer Positions**

Program Manager/Treasurer      Mindy Schell

**Metal Smithing (Beginning/Intermediate/Advanced)**

Lead Instructor/Adv. Grp Leader	Kathy Bowman
Project Instructors	Shelley Curran & <i>Opening</i>
Safety Instructors	Mindy Schell & <i>Opening</i>
Webpage & Social Media Management	Debora Neis & Linda Haynes
Kit Manager	Shelley Curran
Toolbox Sign-outs	Chris Kalange
Inventory/Store Manager	<i>Opening</i>

**Rocket City Jewelers**

Activity Group Leader	Leslie Malakowsky
Kit Manager	Shelley Curran

\*Please note we are all volunteers and most of us have jobs outside of HGMS.  
Schedule is subject to change.

### Lapidary & Related Arts Mentoring Program

Myra Soroczak has learned of interest among members for starting an exploratory mentor club. It would initially be ten couples - five new and five experienced. This could be done over four months during the year. One time a month the mentor would get together with the mentee.

If you are interested, please sign up at a meeting to be on either side of the table.

## Pebble Pups - **New Place, New Room, New Ideas**

**Thursday March 30, 6:00 to 7:00pm - 2 weeks later than usual**  
**Madison County Senior Cafeteria (much larger space)**



Please RSVP to Brian, **256-746-0641**,  
**bburgess771@gmail.com**

With our new location in the Madison County Senior Center (see map), we have a new opportunity for using hands-on activities—crystal growing; mineral, fossil, and rock identification kits: and many other ideas with the ability to keep projects on site from month to month. Parking access is improved, cost is much reduced (no extra Pups fee for participation), and the Cafeteria is even friendlier than the Feb meeting. Enter the north center door, show your key tag to the computer red eye, and walk straight ahead.

We began the year last week with Rock Identification. We have kits with different types of rocks for you to identify (remember there are 3 types). We will be continuing this at the March meeting. Each of you started putting together your binder with all kinds of checks, instructions, charts, and other good information for you to use, to help with the identifications. **These are yours to keep and you will be responsible for bringing them to the meetings.** As we progress through the year and I find other materials and information, you can add it to your binders. I will have the label maker with me, so you can put your name on your binders. These binders will be your information foundation for years to come.

**So get ready to Rock and Roll again.**

We have expanded the age range **to include kids up through age 15.**

With round tables in the cafeteria, we can tailor the activities separately for younger and older groups.

Kids ages 8 through 15 are invited to join this Junior Rock Enthusiasts Group. All participating families must have Family-Member status (the \$20 rate, no extra fee) in the HGMS and an adult family member must be present during the meeting. **We are now meeting at the Madison County Senior Center, 2200 Drake Ave, Huntsville AL. in the Cafeteria. Thanks**

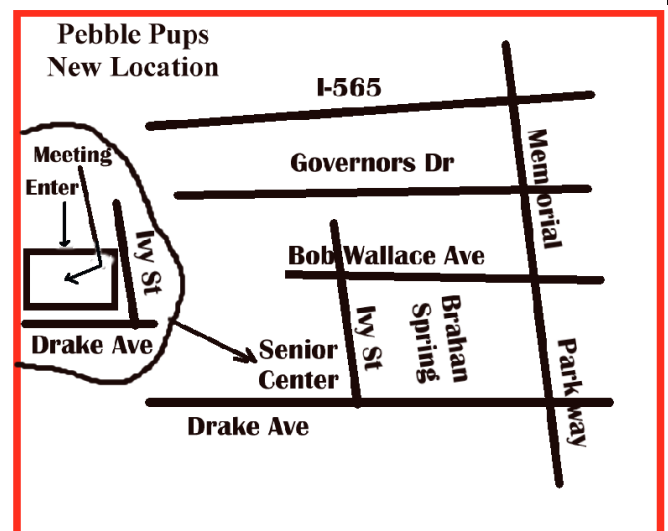
**Meeting dates have been moved to 4th Thursdays in order to have the information included in the current newsletter for each month**

**Next Meeting Scheduled—March 30**

April 27	May 25	June 22
July 27	August 24	September 28
October 26	November 30	

No December meeting

If anyone has any questions, please contact Brian or Bill



## Science Olympiad Regional—2017

The Club ran the Rock & Mineral Section of the UAH Science Olympiad on March 4th. There were 17 Middle School teams and 23 High School teams from all over the State. The teams were enthusiastic, focused, and well prepared.

The club must be doing something right because Ruth Finckenor, one of our younger members, won 1st place in her division, and her team won the opportunity to participate in the State competition. If you ever have doubts about the future, you should attend an Olympiad, a Science Fair, or a Robotics competition to see the enthusiastic and bright young people at work. I find them not only technically savvy, but very articulate.

I wish to thank those who volunteered their time to make our Section a success:

Ben Carroll, Bill Friday, Mark Habercom, and Mark King. Perhaps YOU would enjoy helping next year.

Thanks, Lowell Zoller



## The Fossils

By Ogden Nash

At midnight in the museum hall  
The fossils gathered for a ball.  
There were no drums or saxophones  
But just the clatter of their bones,  
A rolling, rattling, carefree circus  
Of Mammoth polkas and mazurkas.  
Pterodactyls and brontosaurus  
Sang ghostly prehistoric choruses.  
Amid the mastodontic wassil  
I caught the eye of one small fossil.  
Cheer up, sad world, he said, and winked –  
It's kind of fun to be extinct.



Via THE ROCK AND MINERAL CLUB OF LOWER BUCKS COUNTY, PA, INC . Rock Chatter Vol. 45 #6

## CAUTION CONCERNING PRIVACY IN THIS NEW WORLD OF DATA INTRUSION

Since hardly anyone uses a plain old camera anymore, but is taking their pictures with a smart phone, let me remind you, that unless you turn off the GPS to the camera on your phone, the exact location of the photo is recorded within the photo data (This is called geotagging). When posting pictures online, this is information that you may not want the general public to have. If it's a public place, that may be one thing, but if you are, say on a field trip on private property where the club has obtained permission to collect, you would not want the location advertised. Some sites will ask if you want to post the location or other information when you upload a photo. Just be sure that what you post is indeed information that you want out there.



## Jade Information Sheet

John Messamore intended for this to be handed out at the Feb meeting

Jade is a metamorphic rock in the tremolite-actinolite series, Mohs 6-6.5, SG 2.9-3.1, meaning that it has varying percentages of each of those minerals. Jadeite (Myanmar) is from the pyroxene group with Mohs 6.5-7, SG 3.30-3.38. Crystals are interlocking, silky, fibrous to granular. Both are often found associated with softer less metamorphosed dolomitic marbles and serpentines (Mohs 2.5-5.5)

Confucius called it the “Stone of Heaven” due to its virtues and comparing those to virtuous people. Became a behavioral model. Jade has metaphysical properties in Asia; not so much elsewhere.

Seven countries have “good Jade” of finest quality; more than twenty have poor quality Jade. Best Jades are dense, hard, tough, semi-translucent, uniform in color, without inclusions/faults. Nephrite rings musically when struck, knobby on fractured surfaces. 8-25 stones mimic jade and fool the, well....unwary.

Colors & market preferences: imperial green, white, white/green streaked, lavender, apple green, pink, blue, yellow, icy/water, bluish gray, red, orangish, mottled, black, brown.

Changed cultural roles/values over time in China: ritual/death (shamans/kings), royal & officials (rank/ornamentation), scholars (studio/personal adornment), common people (blessings, jewelry, death), everyone (status symbol).

Tests for authenticity from easy-hard: heavier than it looks, scratch test/hardness, translucency, high polish, chimes, magnification, tool marks), heat/density, specific gravity, refractive index, microscopy, Infra-red spectroscopy), electron microscopy, destructive analysis. Be wary and beware, but enjoy jade!



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## Brad's Bench Tips

"Bench Tips for Jewelry Making" and "Broom Casting for Creative Jewelry" are available on Amazon [www.BradSmithJewelry.com](http://www.BradSmithJewelry.com)

*Recommended as a good buy and good reading for all who like to have better lapidary skills.*  
S.S. <http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/>

See all Brad's jewelry books at [Amazon.com/author/author/bradfordsmith](http://Amazon.com/author/author/bradfordsmith)



Announcing Brad's latest jewelry techniques book for those who like Southwest-style stamped jewelry.

**"Making Design Stamps For Jewelry"** covers the step-by-step process of selecting best steels, carving the design, hardening the steel, and tempering the completed stamp to ensure a long

service life. It describes the tools to use, gives examples for how to make several design stamps, and 78 close-up photos that illustrate the important details. Both Kindle and paperback editions are on Amazon at <http://amzn.to/2fvf58T>

### BENCH SHEARS

When cutting sheet metal, it's quicker and easier to use a set of shop shears as compared with using a hand saw. The cut is not as precise, but many times you don't need that. Shears will easily cut up to 24 gauge sheet, and some will cut 22 or even 20 gauge.

Current prices for shears run from \$13 - \$22 in jewelry catalogs, and the Joyce Chen scissors recommended on some jewelry blogs run more than \$20. But we found a cheaper alternative at the 99 Cent Store - some gardening utility scissors that were only \$1.07

I buy a half dozen of them at a time for use in my jewelry classes. They're great for cutting bezels, trimming around a bezel cup and cutting a piece off a larger sheet.



### BEZEL CLOSER

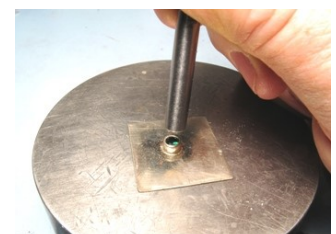
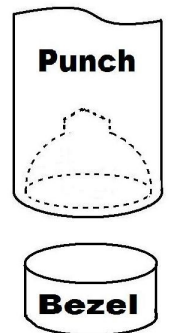
A bezel closer is a steel punch that makes quick work out of pushing the metal down over a round stone and burnishing it. The working end is a concave cavity that fits over your bezel or prong setting and is pushed and twisted to capture the stone. Sets can be purchased but are expensive and contain many sizes you will probably never use. If all you need is one or two sizes, here's how you can make them yourself.

Find a good quality, round steel rod a little larger in diameter than your bezel cup or prong setting. Cut a 5 inch length. File both ends flat. Locate the center of one end, center punch a divot, and drill a small pilot hole about 5 mm deep. Remember to use a little oil as lubricant when cutting steel.

Select a ball bur a bit smaller than the steel rod but slightly larger than the bezel. Enlarge the pilot hole to a full hemispherical cavity. Test for proper fit with your bezel. Bezel should first contact the cavity about a third of the way in. When the size is correct, polish the cavity using Zam on a length of chopstick in your flexshaft. If the tool is not polished, it will leave scratches on your bezel or prongs.

When using the tool, the first step is to capture the stone correctly. I usually work by hand and push the punch straight down over the bezel or prongs. This causes the metal to start bending over the stone. Next I inspect with a lens to be sure the stone is staying level. This is repeated until the stone is seated on its bearing and can't move anymore.

Next you want to force the metal down onto the stone uniformly all the way around. While this can be done by hand, I often gently tap the punch with a hammer. Finally, burnish the bezel by twisting the punch around.



## Mineral of the Month – Aventurine

By Leslie A. Malakowsky

*This month's featured mineral was inspired by Saint Patrick's Day. In the United States, we celebrate Irish-American culture by the "wearin' o' the green" on March 17<sup>th</sup>, and green aventurine is a common gemstone for making into jewelry.*

Who doesn't like aventurine? It's one of the first minerals we encounter as young rockhounds. Technically, aventurine is a rock because it is composed of several minerals, but it's commonly regarded as a gemstone. Other names for aventurine are "Indian jade" and "Greenlandite."

Aventurine is a variety of chalcedony (microcrystalline quartz) with the chemical formula  $\text{SiO}_2$ . Quartz is a member of the tectosilicate group in the silicate family of minerals. (Tectosilicates, or "framework silicates," have a three-dimensional framework of silicate tetrahedra with  $\text{SiO}_2$ . This group of minerals constitutes nearly 75% of the Earth's crust.)

Because aventurine is a rock, its physical properties vary. Some of them include: crystal system: hexagonal; specific gravity: 2.64 - 2.69; hardness: 6.5 - 7 (somewhat lower than single-crystal quartz); tenacity: brittle; fracture: conchoidal.



Green is the most common color, but aventurine may also be blue, yellow, orange, brown or gray. These colors are uncommon though, and they are rarely cut and polished for jewelry or ornamentation.

Aventurine is characterized by translucency and the presence of small flakes or scales of mineral inclusions that give it a shimmering or glittery effect called *aventurescence*. These inclusions are often chrome-bearing fuchsite (a variety of muscovite mica) that give the stone a silvery green or blue sheen. Aventurine is often banded and an overabundance of fuchsite can make the stone appear opaque. This type of aventurine can be mistaken for another green mineral, malachite. Hematite (iron oxide) or goethite (iron hydroxide) give aventurine an orange or brown sheen.

"Aventurine" is a general term that is used by different commercial interests to mean several different kinds of stones. The general public usually encounters aventurine as beads that can range from pale green to medium green. But buyer beware. Beads are frequently treated with oil to make them look darker than they would naturally or dyed to make them more attractive. Green aventurine is occasionally mistaken for jade by novice rockhounds. And orange and red aventurine can be confused with aventurine feldspar or sunstone, although the latter two stones are usually more translucent.

Originally, the name aventurine was derived from the Italian "a ventura" meaning "by chance" in reference to the discovery in the 18<sup>th</sup> century of synthetic aventurine glass or goldstone. These synthetics are reddish (due to copper inclusions) or greenish (due to chromium inclusions) glass often sold as "gem" material. Goldstone is now a common imitation of aventurine and sunstone. But it is distinguishable from those stones by the inclusion of coarse flecks of copper dispersed throughout the glass in an unnaturally uniform manner. Goldstone can be golden brown, blue or green.

The majority of green and blue-green aventurine is mined in India (in the vicinity of Mysore and Chennai). Creamy white, gray and orange aventurine come from Chile, Spain and Russia. The majority of aventurine is carved into beads and figurines with only the finer material cut and polished into cabochons.

References: [wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org), [mindat.org](http://mindat.org), [gemdat.org](http://gemdat.org)

## Trilobites by Bill Friday

Trilobites are fascinating fossils, now long extinct, but which dominated the oceans for a few hundred million years. They were one of the earliest creatures to evolve in the Cambrian Explosion, starting about 570 million years ago (MYA), when most major animal groups we have around us today first evolved, plus the even more which thrived for a while and then became extinct.

Being mobile and excellent swimmers gave them the advantage that they could go hunting for food, rather than waiting for it to drift within range of their grasp from anchored positions. Their sizes at the peak of their reign varied from 3/8" up to 24" length. They would eventually evolve into more than 25,000 scientifically recognized species, in 9 orders (maybe 10) with their fossil remains being found spread over the whole earth. The last of them disappeared during the Permian Era, around 260 MYA reduced to less than an inch in length.



*Ptychagnostus michaeli*



*Acanthopyge consanguinea*  
16mm length

images courtesy

<http://www.fossilmuseum.net>



Trilobite compound eye

Their body forms achieved some fantastic arrays of spines, horns, and spikes. Why such diversity in ornamentation can only be speculated, but it is possible that their ability to see very well may have contributed to mate selection through simple physical attraction. The eye of the Trilobite was already highly sophisticated during the Cambrian era.

The fossil traces which they left aren't rare, at least not from periods of their proliferation and in particular sites. A Devonian era quarry in central Tennessee has so many that it is hard to not step on them. Trilobites were arthropods, possessing an exoskeleton. In most cases, these finds are only the shed skins, either the head or tail, called the pygidium. Occasionally a whole body cast is found there. The Hadj site in Morocco Africa has yielded a large number of spectacular specimens from the Cambrian era, around 550MYA, some quite rare, and very many of them entire body casts.

They disappeared well before either of the two greatest catastrophic extinctions, the Permian-Triassic around 250 MYA and Cretaceous-Tertiary around 65 MYA (which took the dinosaurs), again with the cause being only subject to speculation. But since their direct descendants include shrimps and crabs, it is possible that they became the favorite prey of something larger and hungrier than themselves and their reproductive rate couldn't keep up.

For those interested in obtaining specimens, several websites offer them over a range of prices. One of these regularly has a booth at the HGMS Fall Gem Jewelry and Mineral Show, offering a variety of well restored specimens - The Stones and Bones Collection of Franklin NC - <https://www.stonesbones.com/>. For those who wish to find their own, the picnic area at Pickwick Dam in northwest Alabama can be productively explored during periods of low water. For more information, contact Bill Friday, [bill.friday@earthlink.net](mailto:bill.friday@earthlink.net).



Photo courtesy Stones and Bones Collection

**Errata:** I'm happy to report that my previous article on Index Fossils was read by some folks who were more attentive to details than was I. Carl Carnein in Colorado pointed out that brachiopods are not mollusks, and are only distantly related, though they are included in the more important index fossil databases. Kevin Dermody who does an Earth News column for Rockbuster News in Pennsylvania wrote the following: "Bill Friday did a nice comparison of brachiopods and pelecypods, but he really needs to work on his taxonomy. Snails, slugs, conches, and squids are mollusks, but crinoids are echinoderms, related to starfish and sea urchins; corals are coelenterates, related to jellyfish; and brachiopods are in their own phylum."

Even when being corrected, it is nice to know that my article had a readership. I'll try to be more careful as this series continues.



## Dixie Mineral Council Field Trips

### The Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc



The Friendly Federation - Founded in 1976 to serve  
DMC Program of the SFMS Field Trip Committee  
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**An Official Field Trip of the Mississippi Gem and Mineral Society (Florence, MS) (HOST)**

**An Official Field Trip of the Huntsville Gem & Mineral Society**

**Saturday, March 25, 2017**

**Hammett Gravel Pit, Redwood, Mississippi**

**TRIP:** This is an active gravel pit producing sand and gravel for industries. The site has igneous, metamorphic and sedimentary rocks. The hunt site includes "oversize" rocks culled from commercial gravel. Citronelle gravel is mined from a layer 40 feet below Ice Age loess soil. The abundance of agate, coral and other fossils made this site a favorite last year.

**COLLECTING:** Expect to find agates, coral and other fossils, geodes, chunks of petrified wood and Sioux quartzite. A few unusual finds included a magnificent Petoskey stone and a piece of St. Francois Mountain rhyolite.

**BRING:** We'll hunt around and on tall piles of gravel. Bring a bucket, bag or backpack for collecting as you climb on the gravel piles. A walking staff is helpful but not necessary. Wear close-toed shoes to protect feet. If you need ankle support, wear hiking boots. An extra pair of "muck" boots might be helpful if there is mud. Wear clothes that you won't be afraid to get dirty and bring a change of clothes. Weather may be cold and/or windy. Bring a coat and dress in layers. Expect cold mornings and warm afternoons. If you have allergies or require medication, please bring your medication. Bring water, snacks and drinks. Pack a lunch if you expect to stay until 2 p.m. Bring gloves, hat, sunglasses, sunscreen and a chair.

**REQUIREMENTS:** The collecting area will be limited to specific gravel piles that will be announced on site. Participants must stay off equipment, away from slopes adjacent to ponds, out of ponds and away from loess walls.

**SPECIAL CONDITIONS:** We will not park close to the hunt piles. Unless you are very selective, you will make multiple trips to your auto to deposit your finds to avoid potential injury. Footing on the gravel piles can be tricky. People who have stability issues should stay at the bottom of the gravel piles. It will still be good hunting. Walking and digging on steep slopes can lead to slides. Be aware that gravel slides are possible. Care must be taken when around the ponds. Stay away from the edge of rock piles against the ponds. This is a remote area with little or no cell phone reception.

**REGISTRATION REQUIRED:** Registration deadline is Wednesday, March 22. Please let us know if you will attend and the best way to contact you. In case of bad weather or weather damage to the site, we might have to cancel. Spring in Mississippi can bring heavy rain, sleet, or snow as well as crisp, breezy or wonderfully warm weather.

Contact: Rosina Echols: 601-825-5752 or [rosinae@bellsouth.net](mailto:rosinae@bellsouth.net).

**CHILDREN:** Children are allowed - minimum age 8 years. Adult supervision is required at all times. Children may not throw rocks or run at the site, especially on the gravel piles. Care should be taken when around the ponds. No climbing on equipment is allowed. No pets are allowed.

**FACILITIES:** No stores or facilities are close to the collecting site. A portable toilet will be on the site. At the meeting place before the convoy goes to the site, there will be drinks, snacks, some prepared breakfast/lunch food items, and restrooms. Hotels and restaurants are available in both locations. If you would prefer to stay in the Jackson area, there are a variety of hotels and restaurants available at Exit 48 (Pearl).

**DIRECTIONS AND WHERE TO MEET:** We will meet at 8:00 a.m. CDT at the Chevron Truck Stop on the south side of I-20 at Exit 27 (Bolton exit). This is west of Jackson and Clinton / east of Vicksburg. Please sign in when you arrive. Prior to departure, there will be a short discussion of the plans for the day. We will leave the truck stop at 8:15 a.m. We will drive approximately 10 minutes west on I-20, then travel on gravel roads to the hunt site for about 30 minutes. If you have trouble, call Trip Leader David Kraft, 601-613-7360. [david@truckservicesms.com](mailto:david@truckservicesms.com)





# Dixie Mineral Council Field Trips

## The Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc



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DMC Program of the SFMS Field Trip Committee  
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An Official Field Trip of the Charlotte Gem & Mineral Club, Charlotte, NC, HOST  
An Official Field Trip of the Huntsville Gem & Mineral Society

**Sharpes Emerald Prospect Alexander County, NC**  
**Saturday, April 15, 2017 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM Eastern Time**

**TRIP:** Sharpes Emerald Prospect is operated in association with the Mountain Area Gem and Mineral Association (MAGMA). The club has been generous enough to allow CG&MC to host a field trip at their site. The mine is located in what is considered the most productive emerald mining district in North America. Emeralds are yet to be found, but there are current mineral finds of glass-clear tessin, smoky quartz, tourmaline, muscovite mica, beryl, and other minerals are abundance. The mine is geared with rockhounds and collectors in mind, and is not salted with offsite material

**COLLECTING:** Mining and gathering can suit a variety of styles. Hard rock digging is available in pits and trenches throughout the site. Less rigorous collecting can be found by sifting and gathering in dump piles on the property. All areas of the mine are open to collectors and new areas are opening regularly.

**REQUIREMENTS:** All visitors must pay fee and sign release form before digging. Disclosure forms and payment can be brought on day of field trip or sent in advance to:  
Hiddenite Gems Investment Group, PO Box 542, Leicester, NC 28748 .

Release forms are available here:

<http://www.wncrocks.com/resources/Sharpes%20Emerald%20Prospect%20Release.pdf>

**SPECIAL CONDITIONS:** Protective equipment such as goggles/eyewear, boots, and gloves are recommended.

### NO PETS

**FEE:** \$25/day for adults, \$20 per day for Dixie Mineral Council members. Children 12 years of age or younger are free but must be accompanied by parent or guardian

**REGISTRATION:** Advance registration is not required, but release form must be completed

**FACILITIES:** None - There is a gas station a mile down the road with bathrooms, drinks and snacks

### CONTACT:

Prior to event, Sam Baker  
(704) 516-9649.

On day of event:  
Murray Simon (704) 543-6651



## March Birthdays

5 Allison Kowalczyk	21 Leigh Ann Hurst
5 Jacob Roberts	21 Teresa Roberts
8 Virgil Fischer	22 Susan Hessler
9 Julie McCullough	22 Gene Powers
14 Sarah Herman	22 Harry Wiley
15 Carol Roden	24 Preston Hurst
15 Victoria Bedard	24 Carson Knight
16 June Kalange	27 Kelly Gulliver
18 Michael O'Dell	29 Mark Bishop
18 Ola Ann Lee	29 Linda McKinney
19 Ben Carroll	29 Mario Bedard
20 Robert Broussard	30 Chelie Britt
20 Charlotte Gilchrist	30 Robyn McCoy

## Anniversaries

7 Barbara Deckelman  
 14 Ben & Monika Carroll  
 18 Robert & Gayle Joyce  
 22 Wayne & Rhonda Hall  
 24 Margaret & Jerry Olson  
 28 Leigh Ann & Preston Hurst  
 31 Wendell & Mary Lou Allen

## April Birthdays

1 Rhonda Springer	19 Thelia DeMoor
4 Khezekiah Bellamy	20 Wendy Lear
6 Tim Eve	22 Alex McCormick
11 Leslie Malakowsky	23 Bill Friday
15 Taryn Greene	25 Gary Thompson
16 Elena Clark	26 Margery Ruble
17 Bill Sweetman	27 Don Aldridge
17 Bill Walters	30 Jane Detwiler
17 Cindy Miller	

## Anniversaries

7 Joe & Sherrie Bonin  
 8 Mike & Myra Soroczak

## March 2017 - Senior Center Lapidary Lab Schedule Lapidary, Silver Jewelry and Wood Carving—

To use lapidary equipment, you must be certified unless a licensed instructor is present  
- currently: B. Friday, & C. Kalange

<b>Monday</b>	<b>7:30am-9:00am</b>	<b>Open Lab: Lapidary, certified HGMS 60+</b>
	<b>9:00am- Noon</b>	<b>Silver Jewelry - Ron West, Instructor - Seniors &amp; HGMS 60+</b>
	<b>Noon-4:30pm</b>	<b>Open Lab: Lapidary, certified HGMS 60+</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>7:30am-9:00am</b>	<b>Open Lab: Lapidary, certified HGMS 60+</b>
	<b>9:00am—Noon</b>	<b>Silver Jewelry - Ron West, Instructor - Seniors &amp; HGMS 60+</b>
	<b>Noon -3:00 pm</b>	<b>Silver Jewelry- Terry Clarke, Instructor - Seniors &amp; HGMS 60+</b>
	<b>3:00pm-4:30 pm</b>	<b>Open Lab: Lapidary, certified HGMS 60+</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>6:00pm-9:00pm</b>	<b>Open Lapidary &amp; Open Jewelry - certified HGMS 18+</b>
	<b>7:30am-4:30 pm</b>	<b>Open Lab: Lapidary - certified HGMS 60+</b>
	<b>6:00pm-9:00pm</b>	<b>Open Lapidary &amp; Jewelry - certified HGMS 18+</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>7:30am-9:00am</b>	<b>Open Lab: Lapidary - certified HGMS 60+</b>
	<b>9:00am-11:30am</b>	<b>Silver Jewelry- Ron West, Instructor - Seniors &amp; HGMS 60+</b>
	<b>Noon-3:00pm</b>	<b>Wood Carving - Copeland, Instructor - Seniors &amp; HGMS 60+</b>
	<b>3:00pm-4:30 pm</b>	<b>Open Lab: Lapidary -certified HGMS 60+</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>6:00pm-9:00pm</b>	<b>Metal Smithing &amp; Jewelry Classes— HGMS 18+</b>
	<b>7:30am-12:00am</b>	<b>Open Lab: Lapidary - certified Seniors &amp; HGMS 60+</b>

## 2017 HUNTSVILLE GEM &amp; MINERAL SOCIETY OFFICERS

President: Mike Harrison 256-797-2435

[wm.harrison.123@gmail.com](mailto:wm.harrison.123@gmail.com)

Vice President— Mark Habercom

[mhabercom@energize.net](mailto:mhabercom@energize.net)

Recording Secretary: Dorothea Chism

[dorotheachism@gmail.com](mailto:dorotheachism@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Clara Goode, 256-883-9194

[clarag1964@gmail.com](mailto:clarag1964@gmail.com)

Newsletter Editor: Bill Friday, 256-527-8227

[bill.friday@earthlink.net](mailto:bill.friday@earthlink.net)Directors at Large: Chris Kalange—[ckalange@comcast.net](mailto:ckalange@comcast.net)Bruce Kowalczyk—256-424-2197 [arkowalczyk@aol.com](mailto:arkowalczyk@aol.com)Mindy Schell, Ex Officio - [mindy.schell@yahoo.com](mailto:mindy.schell@yahoo.com) 334-790-0671Federation Liaison - Charlie Willhoite - 256-340-3448—[cdwillhoite@yahoo.com](mailto:cdwillhoite@yahoo.com)

2705 Jarvis Street S. W. Decatur AL 35603

## 2017 COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Membership: Bill Friday— 256-527-8227

[bill.friday@earthlink.net](mailto:bill.friday@earthlink.net)

2508 Excalibur Dr. Huntsville AL 35803

Scrapbook: Dianna O'Dell, 256-828-1813

Librarian: Leslie Malakowsky, 256-755-0479

Club Publicity: open

Education &amp; Craftsmanship: vacant

Field Trips: Brian Burgess, 256-746-0641

Hospitality: Caryl Nixon 256-426-5061

[caryl.nixon@outlook.com](mailto:caryl.nixon@outlook.com)

Mineral ID: Wayne Falkenberg—

[falkenbergwp@comcast.net](mailto:falkenbergwp@comcast.net)

(William Holland offers a class for this)

Property: Chris Kalange, 256-883-7627

[ckalange@comcast.net](mailto:ckalange@comcast.net)

Program Chair—Myra Soroczak 256-446-9938 -

[Soroczak@yahoo.com](mailto:Soroczak@yahoo.com)

Show Chair: Tony Smith, 256-603-3095.

Show Vendor Chair: Lowell Zoller, 256-534-8803

Show Volunteer Chair: Joe Bonin, 256-859-9711

Show Publicity Chair: Tony Smith, 256-852-3210

Show Treasurer: Clara Goode, 256-883-9194

[clarag1964@gmail.com](mailto:clarag1964@gmail.com)

**PURPOSE OF THE SOCIETY:** The Huntsville Gem & Mineral Society is a non-profit educational organization for people interested in mineralogy, geology, paleontology, and related lapidary arts. Its primary purpose is the education of the members and the general public in these areas. This purpose is accomplished through programs, shows, lectures to school children and organizations, and exchange of rocks, minerals and artifacts.

**DUES:** Annual dues are \$15.00 per person, \$20.00 per family, and are due on January 1st of each year

Membership Applications may be found at our webpage [www.Huntsvillegms.org](http://www.Huntsvillegms.org), at meetings, or the lab

**MEETING PLACE:** Huntsville/Madison County Senior Center, 2200 Drake Ave, Huntsville, AL at 6:30pm.

**DATE:** Fourth Tuesday of each month except for April Auction, June picnic, Christmas Dinner and major holidays.

**Federation Liaison:** Huntsville Gem & Mineral Society, 2705 Jarvis St SW, Decatur AL 35603, Attn: Charlie Willhoite

The Society is affiliated with the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies ,  
the Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, and the Dixie Mineral Council

**Federation Newsletters:**

**SFMS:** [www.amfed.org/sfms/lodestar\\_newsletter.html](http://www.amfed.org/sfms/lodestar_newsletter.html)

**AFMS:** [www.amfed.org/news/default.htm](http://www.amfed.org/news/default.htm)

**DMC:** [http://www.amfed.org/sfms/\\_dmc/dmc.htm](http://www.amfed.org/sfms/_dmc/dmc.htm)



## 2017 CALENDAR

- 28 Mar '17 - Regular HG&MS Meeting, Madison County Senior Center,  
2200 Drake Ave, Huntsville, AL 6:30pm
- 29 Apr '17 - Annual Rock Auction— donations are being accepted now.  
Jaycees Bldg, 2180 Airport Rd, Huntsville AL
- 23 May '17 - Regular HG&MS Meeting, Madison County Senior Center,  
2200 Drake Ave, Huntsville, AL 6:30pm
- 17 Jun '17 - Annual HGMS Picnic— details coming  
Monte Sano State Park, Huntsville AL
- 25 Jul '17 - Regular HG&MS Meeting, Madison County Senior Center,  
2200 Drake Ave, Huntsville, AL 6:30pm
- 22 Aug '17 - Regular HG&MS Meeting, Madison County Senior Center,  
2200 Drake Ave, Huntsville, AL 6:30pm
- 26 Sep '17 - Regular HG&MS Meeting, Madison County Senior Center,  
2200 Drake Ave, Huntsville, AL 6:30pm
- 13-15 Oct '17 - Fall HGMS Gem Jewelry & Mineral Show -  
Jaycees Bldg, 2180 Airport Rd
- 24 Oct '17 - Regular HG&MS Meeting, Madison County Senior Center,  
2200 Drake Ave, Huntsville, AL 6:30pm

Deadline for Next Newsletter— April 15, 2017

## Rocket City Rocks & Gems

Bill Friday, Editor  
2508 Excalibur Dr.  
Huntsville, AL 35803

HGMS March 2017



**Dated Material**  
**Do not Delay**