

ROCKET CITY ROCKS & GEMS



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

Volume 52 No. 06

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

June 2020

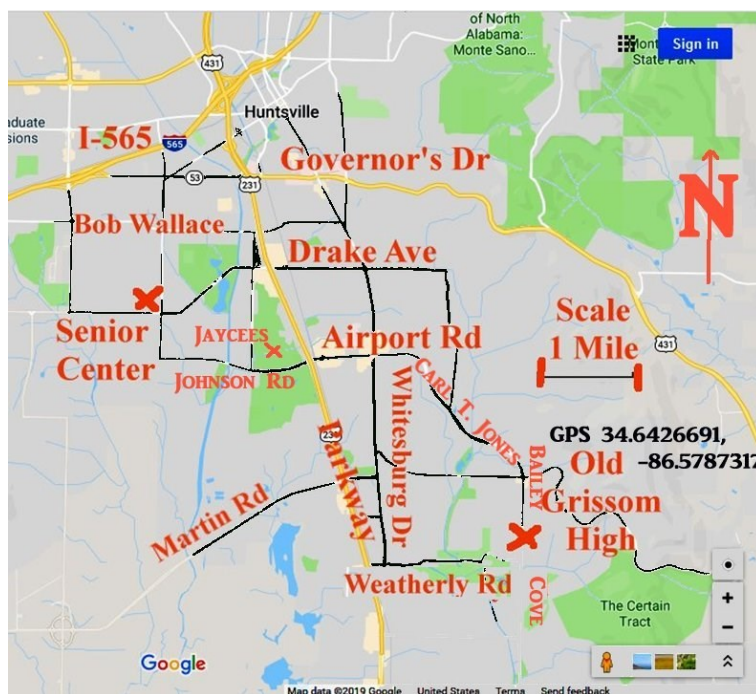
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Hiatus till further notice for:

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July Meeting at our New Education Center
We will NOT be able to hold the June meeting.



www.huntsvillegms.org/ - www.facebook.com/HuntsvilleGMS -



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Hello all!

I'm glad to announce we are getting closer to normal again for the Gem and Mineral Society. We are holding the picnic this Saturday (with safety precautions and social distancing) for those who wish to venture out. We will be subsidizing "box lunches" from Ted's BBQ and Panera Bread and it is Bring Your Own Drink (no alcohol per State Park rules).

We wanted to have a meeting this month as well but the logistics just won't let us do that, at least not yet. And the facilities are shaping up beautifully. We have moved the lab, metals, and jewelry equipment from the Senior Center to the new Huntsville Gem and Mineral Education Center in the fully renovated Grissom High School field house. All of this still needs to be re-assembled, but at least it is on site. Final utilities installations are on-going, to be completed in the next weeks. But when completed and back in operation, we will have the best facilities we could imagine! We will be the envy of clubs across the nation!

The Auction will not happen in person this year but we are working on alternatives. Stay tuned.

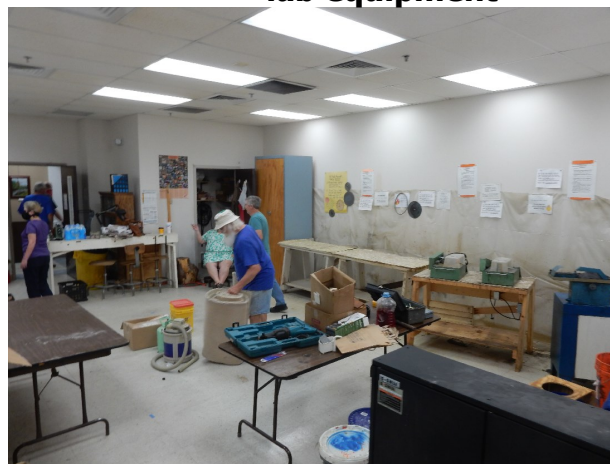
The Annual Fall Show is still on for October at the Jaycees Building. The building is currently turned into an ice rink but we have been assured we can hold our show without wearing ice skates! With the "Rock Food" table year before last and the Moon Rock last year, this year's big attraction has to be HUGE! And it is! We are expanding the Children's area with activities for all ages. We are working with the local school systems to get them involved. We have a new committee working hard to pull the best ideas together and make it happen!

All in all, your board of directors and committee chairs have been very productive and I want to express my appreciation to all that have pitched in during these uncertain times.

I can't wait to see all of your smiles in person!

You humble president, Mike Harrison

Packing up the old lapidary lab equipment



Dixie Mineral Council Field Trips

The Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc

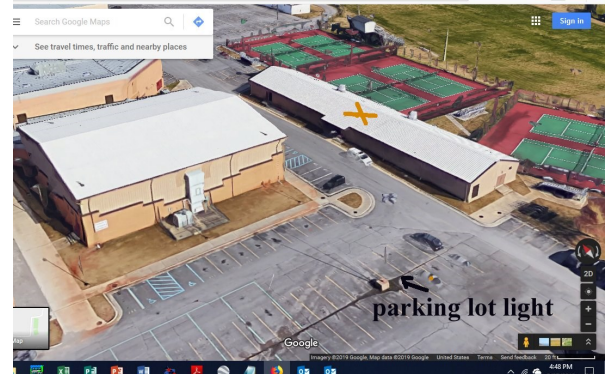


**The Friendly Federation - Founded in 1976 to serve
DMC Program of the SFMS Field Trip Committee
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The Dixie Mineral Council has cancelled this year's field trip schedule, rolling all trips to next year, with confirmation by the various SFMS Clubs who were scheduled for this year. That includes HGMS which was to have sponsored a trip to the Hogg Mine in August. Settling all of this out will be a thankless task for Lori Carter, but bless her heart, she will have it all worked out as soon as member Clubs provide their updates.



Original Entry

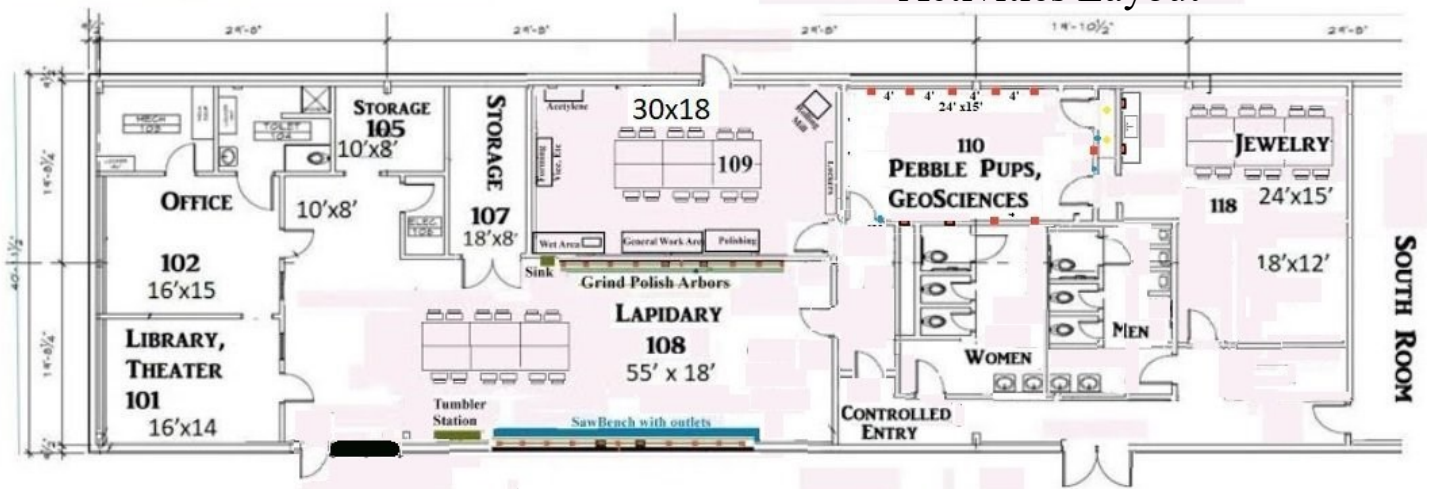


Aerial View



New Glassed-In Entry

Activities Layout



Before

Lapidary Room



Now

The transformation of the old Grissom High School Field House into the sparkling, spacious, and inviting Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center is simply amazing. Several of the Board and Committee members met the City Planners early to see to where we might be relocated from the Senior Center. We were cautiously excited, but recognizing that there was so much more room, and the flexibility of accessible times of day was very much more friendly to our younger members, with the concurrence of the membership, we committed to the City that we would make the move. They in turn promised to renovate it and make it into a place we would be proud to call our new home. There are a few remaining tasks, mainly plumbing for sinks and drains, and power for machinery along the various walls, but those should be completed within two weeks. We will be adding a secure access control panel and security cameras.

Since the Senior Center isn't scheduled to open until July 6th, we elected to go ahead and move all of our equipment into the new building, stacked out of the way of the final City tasks. Putting all of this equipment back into operational status will require a LOT of additional work, but the turnout for the move was so gratifying, we anticipate that similar crews will help get us back to enjoying our favorite hobby.

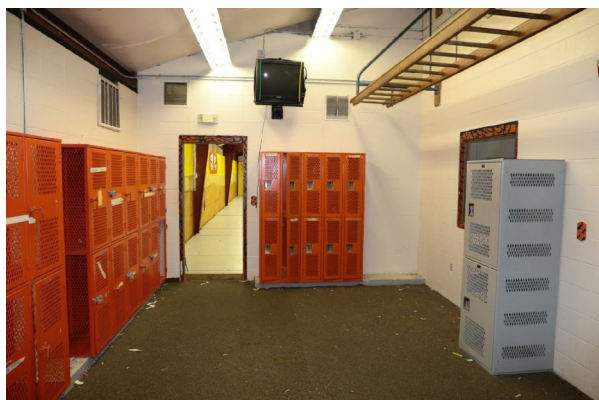


Before

Metals Room



Now



Before

Jewelry Room



Now



Picnic- Saturday Jun 20th, 9:00am to 2:00pm Monte Sano State Park Pavilion

No Park fee to enter, just say HGMS picnic, take the first right turn into the picnic area.

The meal at 11:30 will consist of Box Lunches, which hopefully everyone who plans to attend has ordered their Box Lunch to their taste from Ted's Barbecue.

The HGMS is subsidizing the meal cost so that you pay \$3. Bring your own drinks (no alcohol) and extra chairs.

There is a nearby children's playground, restrooms in the pavilion, and tables out under the shade.

Some members will be bringing rocks, jewelry, etc for sale, swap, or just to show off.



Annual Auction is now spread out over the entire year. We were unable to have it on our planned March 21st date, and couldn't crowd it in between the move to the new building and the Fall Show without risking not having enough workers, or enough bidders, or without interfering with the Show a couple of months later. So each meeting will feature a silent auction, with the offerings featured both in the newsletter and on our website, where you may view ahead, and then at the meeting make your offers. Each month will feature a range of value of the specimens, ranging from slabs to ornate stone carvings and jewelry. The remaining items will be held over to next year's March Auction in the Jaycees Building.

Rocket City Jewelers (RCJ) News*By Leslie Malakowsky*

We've moved our weekly online meetings to Wednesdays, at 6p.m., which is our regular meeting time. Thank you, Karen for keeping these meetings going for us! Every RCJ member is invited (and encouraged) to participate! We use this time to stay in touch with each other. Formal classes are suspended until we meet again, but many of us are working on projects at home. You're welcome to share what you're working on during the meeting or just sit back and visit!

We'll continue to meet online until we move to the new Huntsville Gem and Mineral Education Center at 7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville. The city is in the final stages of completing the plumbing and electrical work. We've submitted our budget proposal to the HGMS board for approval, and we should hear back from them soon. The proposed budget includes items we'll need in our new room such as tables, chairs, and workbenches. Thank you, Judy and Theresa, for working hard on the budget. In the meantime, stay healthy! Happy jewelry making!

Volunteers:

Group Leader/Lead Instructor Leslie Malakowsky

Instructors Judy Osmundson, Theresa Chivers, Myra Soroczak

Kit Manager Sherrie Bonin

Treasurer Clara Goode

Facebook open

Security Judy Osmundson

RCJ is open to **every member** of the HGMS. (Gentlemen, too!) If you love making jewelry, please join us! All skill levels are welcome! Please note that when you'd like to take a class but you don't regularly attend RCJ, **you must contact us one week prior to the class** so we can make a kit for you.

Remember our core values: to share what we know, learn new skills, and have fun! Please let me know what you are able to teach and what you would like to learn.

Metal Smithing/Silver Group by Kathy Bowman & Shelley Curran

THERE WERE NO SCHEDULED PROJECT CLASS IN JUNE DUE TO THE COVID 19 CLOSINGS. AT THIS POINT WE DON'T KNOW HOW THE QUARANTINE SITUATION WILL BE UNTIL JULY. HOPEFULLY WE WILL HAVE A BETTER IDEA SOON OF WHEN WE WILL RESUME OUR NORMALLY SCHEDULED MONDAY & THURSDAY WORK SESSIONS.



Certification Classes: If you would like to be certified so you can take our classes, please send your name and contact information (name, email address, and phone number) to HGMS@wilddivystudio.com. We will contact you and set up a day for you to come. Those who sign up will be notified when the next class will be scheduled.

Class Instructors: Kathy Bowman & Shelley Curran

Toolbox Sign-outs CG Lester

Inventory Manager **Opening**

Store Manager **Opening**

Kit Manager Shelley Curran

Webpage & Social Media Management Kathy Bowman

*Note: We are all volunteers so the schedule is subject to change.



Pearl tiara of Empress Eugénie (1853) featuring 212 natural pearls, Louvre, Paris.

Mineral of the Month – Pearls *By Leslie A. Malakowsky*

Pearls are not minerals, but because they're used in jewelry, they're considered to be *organic* gemstones meaning that they come from living or once-living organisms. Other examples of organic materials used as gemstones are amber, jet, shell, coral, ivory, and animal bone.

Pearls are small hard objects formed within the soft mantle tissue of living shelled mollusks. Pearls are composed of calcium carbonate (CaCO_3) mainly as aragonite (or a mixture of aragonite and calcite) in cryptocrystalline form deposited in concentric layers. These are the same minerals as in the shells of the animals that produce them.

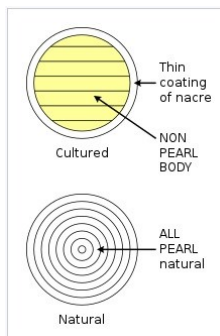
The ideal pearl is perfectly round and smooth, but many other shapes are possible.

There are two kinds of pearl-producing mollusks: bivalves and gastropods (formerly known as univalves). In a bivalve, the animal is enclosed within two shells joined along a hinge line. Examples include clams, oysters, and mussels. In a gastropod, the animal lives within a single shell. Examples include escargot, abalone, conches, and whelks. The majority of pearls sold on the market today come from freshwater pearl oysters and mussels.

Conulariids were marine animals that lived from the Upper-Cambrian period to the Triassic period. Interestingly, they produced pearls within their shells similar to the way mollusks do today. These fossil pearls give us clues about the animals' internal anatomy, but because of their chemical composition (calcium phosphate) and their extreme age, these pearls aren't used in jewelry or decorative objects.

There are two kinds of genuine pearls: *natural* pearls and *cultured* or *farmed* pearls. Natural pearls occur spontaneously in the wild, but they're very rare. Natural pearls used to be found in many parts of the world. But today, natural pearling is limited to Bahrain in the Persian Gulf and to the southern Australian Indian ocean. Sometimes x-rays must be used to positively identify natural pearls from cultured ones.

Cultured or *farmed* pearls require human intervention in which the mollusks are *seeded*. Most cultured freshwater pearls have an irregular non-spherical shape known as *baroque*. To achieve a baroque shape, a piece of mantle tissue is placed in the mollusk as a nucleus for the pearl to form. Many other shapes such as rice pearls and stick pearls are made in this way. Cultured *saltwater* pearls tend to be teardrop shaped because a spherical shaped piece of mantle tissue is used as the nucleus.



Perhaps the most well-known cultured saltwater pearls are Tahitian pearls and South Sea pearls. These pearls are produced by black-lipped oysters (*Pinctada margaritifera*) and gold- and white-lipped oysters (*Pinctada maxima*), respectively. Tahiti is the largest cultivator of black-lipped oysters, and Western Australia is the largest cultivator of gold-lipped oysters. Tahitian pearls are highly valued because they can't be mass produced; the oysters can only be nucleated one at a time. Tahitian pearls, commonly referred to as "black pearls", are not black; they can be green, purple, aubergine, blue, grey, silver or peacock. But South Sea pearls are more valuable than Tahitian pearls because the *Pinctada margaritifera* oyster is more abundant than *Pinctada maxima*. South Sea pearls can be white, silver, pink, gold, cream, or any combination of these colors, and they can have rainbow color overtones.

Whether natural or cultured, gem-quality pearls are *nacreous* and *iridescent*, like the interior of the shell that produces them. Nacre is a strong, resilient composite material also known as *mother-of-pearl*. Iridescence (also known as *goniochromism*) is a phenomenon where a surface appears to gradually change color as the angle of view or the angle of illumination changes. Other examples of iridescent surfaces include soap bubbles, feathers, butterfly wings, and some minerals.

Almost all species of shelled mollusks are capable of producing pearls or "calcareous concretions" under the right set of circumstances, but not all of these are considered gem quality. They usually lack luster or iridescence and aren't considered attractive. Sometimes they even lack durability. Still, they're interesting to *malacologists* (folks who study mollusks) and collectors, and under U.S. Federal Trade Commission rules, they can be legitimately referred to as "pearls".

For centuries, pearls have been harvested or cultivated for use in jewelry, personal adornment, and art.

They've also been crushed and used in cosmetics, medicines, and paint. Because the finest quality natural pearls have been highly valued as gemstones and objects of beauty, the word "pearl" has become a metaphor for something rare, fine, admirable and valuable.

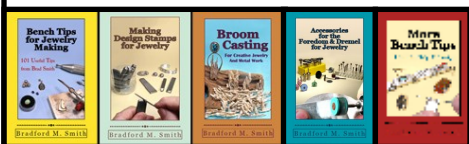
Did you know that the largest known pearl, the "Pearl of Puerto", is one foot wide, about two feet long, and weighs 75 pounds? It was found in 2006 in a giant clam by a fisherman from the village of Puerto Princesa on Palawan Island in the Philippines. Wow!

References: <https://en.wikipedia.org/>

Brad's Bench Tips

"Bench Tips for Jewelry Making" and "Broom Casting for Creative Jewelry" are available on Amazon www.BradSmithJewelry.com. For those who enjoy these bench tips, I'm happy to announce a second volume is now available on Amazon. "More Bench Tips" includes 86 additional ways to save time, avoid frustration or improve quality at the bench. These new tips cover problems in fabrication, stone setting, casting, soldering and polishing.

Browse through a couple of the new ones at <https://amazon.com/dp/B07D4B45JJ/>. These are just a few of the many tips in the new book, "More Bench Tips for Jewelry Making". See a sample chapter at <https://amzn.to/2KCygh4>



QUICK CLOSE-UPS

Often when trying to get a close-up photo with your iPhone or Android, you end up with a fuzzy, out-of-focus image. Next time try using your loupe over the camera lens. It works quickly and easily.



LITTLE THINGS CAN BITE

Most jewelers treat motorized equipment with caution. We've all heard stories about workpieces coming loose in the drill press or about getting long hair or clothing caught in the polishing machine. It stands to reason that a machine with a motor of a half horsepower or so is going to win out over its operator. We all know that, and I'm not going to harp on it. That's not the point of this story.

I want to talk about the smaller motor powered machines we often use, the ones with little 3 inch diameter motors. For instance, these small motors are used in flexshafts and micro buffers. They're so small that many of us forget caution when using them. I'm guilty of it myself sometimes, and believe me it can get you in trouble. Here's what happened to two people I know.

One friend had a polishing bur bend in the handpiece and then whack the thumb that was holding the workpiece. The swelling was substantial, and it took several weeks to regain normal use. A small underpowered motor? Not so.

Another friend was using one of the small buffing machines, the kind you can stop when you apply too much pressure to the wheel. Not to worry about such an underpowered beast you say. Wrong, it literally jumped up and bit the hand that feeds it !

Buffer was set on a low table to do a quick polish, so was not mounted or clamped. A buff was installed on the right spindle, no buff on the left. Friend was wearing a tight-fitting, long-sleeved sweater. While buffing on the right wheel, the left tapered spindle caught a thread on the friend's left sleeve and started grabbing more and more threads and sleeve.

Rather than pulling the arm into the machine, the light buffer quickly lifted off the table and started climbing up the underside of the friends arm. There was no way to get a hand of the on/off switch because the unit was spinning wildly and battering my friend like a club wielded by a mad man. Only when someone nearby could grab the power cord and yank it from the wall did the mayhem stop.

So when you're in the shop, please think safety. Don't take even the little motors for granted.



Pebble Pups

Gem & Mineral Education Center

Current plans are to re-start the Pebble Pups programs on **JULY 23**, allowing the virus problem to settle out further.

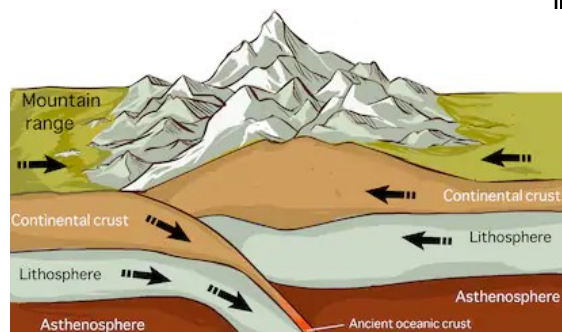
When we resume, we will continue a four part series on geological processes.

1. Plate Tectonic Theory - Done in February
 2. **Mountains - July 28**
 3. Plateaus - August 27
 4. Sedimentary Basins - September 24
- Transition to New Group Leaders -

Brian will explain each subject, how each relates to minerals, and how to rockhound each formation. He will explain what can be generally found in each formation. We will meet in the new Craft Center at the old Grissom High facility at 6:00 on June 28. Bring your friends.

For more information, contact

Brian Burgess at bburgess771@gmail.com 256-479-2993



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GeoSciences

Like all the rest of the world, particularly Senior Center activities for April & May are cancelled.

But we should be back in business for a GeoSciences meeting on Thursday June 9.

Tom Burleson of the Von Braun Astronomical Society has offered to present a program on Meteorites, elaboration to be provided later, but he was encouraged to dig deep and take his time.



June Birthdays

4 Elizabeth Kowalczyk	17 Lori Crymes
4 Juyne Posta	22 Gavin Crunk
5 Emma Allen	23 Jonathan Kowalczyk
5 Ruth Kemper	24 Tonya Sitko
7 Nancy Hosmer	25 Caryl Jean Nixon
11 David Inman	26 David O'Dell
12 Julia Priest	27 Dianna O'Dell
12 Dewey Weaver	28 Lori Willhoite
15 Matthew Kowalczyk	Grayson Lester
15 Al Moebes	



June
Pearl

Anniversaries

5 David & Karen Bath	15 David & Tracey Inman
7 Bill Sweetman	19 Michael & Sheila Cape
8 Charlie & Lori Willhoite	21 Lawrence & Diana Nelms
9 Jimi & Tonya Sitko	23 Tom & Alicia Detwiler
12 Wayne & Polly Falkenberg	29 Caryl & David Nixon
12 Dewey Weaver	30 William Aycock
13 John & Ivey Cook	

July Birthdays

2 Katie Beth Allen	19 Laura Carpenter
6 Isaac Burgess	19 Stacy Walbridge
7 Tom Detwiler	21 John Lindberg
9 Liz Cooper	25 C.G. Lester
12 Lucy Allen	25 Carol Rampey
12 Kathryn McCullough	26 Fritz Detwiler
13 Linda Aycock	26 Clara Goode
13 Jerry McDaniel	27 Angela Kowalczyk
18 Abigail Inman	30 Bruce Kowalczyk
	Kerry Lester



July
Ruby

Anniversaries

3 Jim & Bonnie Treadway
11 David & Nancy Hosmer
13 Linda Aycock
13 Jerry & Cynthia McDaniel
26 Elroy Walker
28 Steve & Sheila Tesh
31 Stacy & Kathi Walbridge

The Lapidary Lab will be closed until further notice

Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center Schedule

To use lapidary equipment, you must be certified unless a licensed instructor is present currently: Bill Friday, Isabel Leon y Leon & Michael Cape

Until the lapidary equipment is reassembled and operational, it is not practical to post a schedule. Current plans are to maintain the open lab for all qualified members ages 18+ on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings.

Daytime access for qualified members is still being worked out as we finalize the building opening times and secure access protocol.

The biggest change from previous scheduling at the Senior Center is that now qualified members ages 18+ will be able to use the equipment during the daytime.

2020 HUNTSVILLE GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY OFFICERS

President- Mike Harrison - william.m.harrison@boeing.com
 Vice President- Isabel Leon y Leon- isabel.leonyleon@gmail.com
 Recording Secretary: Ruth Kemper- bob_kemper@yahoo.com
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 Michael Soroczak- soroczak@yahoo.com
 Les Bartel - lester.bartel@gmail.com
 Ex Officio - bill.friday@earthlink.net

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Publicity: Bob Kemper bob_kemper@yahoo.com	Program Chair—Mike Harrison william.m.harrison@boeing.com
Webpage: Leslie Malakowsky, lmalakowsky@gmail.com	Show Chair: Tony Smith, 256-603-3095. tsmith@erc-incorporated.com
Auction Chair: Shelley Curran curranshelley1@gmail.com	Show Vendor Chair: Lowell Zoller, 256-534-8803 Lzol@comcast.net
Field Trips: Open	Show Volunteer Chair: Theresa Chivers, 256-837-6819 wolfson929@gmail.com
Rocket City Jewelers: Leslie Malakowsky 256) 755-0479 lmalakowsky@gmail.com	Show Publicity Chair - Tony Smith tsmith@erc-incorporated.com
Hospitality: Caryl Nixon 256-426-5061 caryl.nixon@outlook.com	Show Treasurer: Clara Goode, 256-883-9194 clarag1964@gmail.com
Mineral ID: Michael Soroczak soroczak@yahoo.com (William Holland offers a class for this)	

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, artifacts, and newsletters.

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, at meetings, or the lab

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

DATE: Fourth Tuesday of the month except for March Auction, June picnic, Christmas Dinner and major holidays.

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

AFMS: www.amfed.org/news/default.htm

DMC: http://www.amfed.org/sfms/_dmc/dmc.htm



2020-21 CALENDAR

23 Jun '20 Cancelled

20 Jun '20 Annual HGMS Picnic, Monte Sano State Park
Saturday, Pavilion 1, 9:00 till 2:00

28 Jul '20 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm

25 Aug '20 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm

22 Sep '20 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm

9-11 Oct '20 HGMS Fall Show,
Jaycees Bldg, 2180 Airport Rd, Huntsville AL

27 Oct '20 - Regular HG&MS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm

24 Nov '20 - Regular HG&MS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm

8 Dec '20 - Annual HGMS Christmas Dinner - place to be determined

26 Jan '21 Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm

<p>Deadline for Next Newsletter July 19, 2020</p>

**Dated material
Do not delay**

June 2020

Rocket City Rocks & Gems
Bill Friday, Editor
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Huntsville, AL 35803