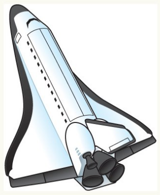
ROCKET CITY ROCKS & GEMS



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

Volume 52 No. 07 *"We'll go to the Moon for a Rock"* **July 2020**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

July Meeting Cancelled - One of these Days!

Meanwhile, the restoration of the activity centers in the new Gem & Mineral Education Center progress. Saturday work days will continue till we are ready for an Open House in August. **Metals, RCJ, Lapidary, Pups**

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

Hello all!

I do hope this note finds you well! A few of the brave met for our annual picnic and rock swap and it was awesome! We are also making great progress on getting the Huntsville Gem and Mineral Education Center together for the Grand Opening!

We are waiting on the powers that be to give us the word that we can meet in person formally and we hope it will be soon. Until then, we do still have lots of work to do on out new "digs". If you are "handy" and want to help, please contact Bill Friday about what needs to be done and how and when you can help! That way you can get a sneak peek at all of the planning, prepping and "git 'er dun" activities that have happened so far!

Your humble Prez,

Mike Harrison

We are sad to report the loss of HGMS member Charlie Mohling.
He was born on January 4, 1930 and passed away on June 24, 2020 in Huntsville AL. He and his wife Mildred were long-time active members of the Huntsville Gem & Mineral Society for over twenty six years, and had been recognized with Life Memberships. They had also been regular drivers for Meals on Wheels. A graveside service was held on Sunday, June 28th 2020 at the Valhalla Memory Gardens. We offer our sincere condolences to Mildred and the family.

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

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 the 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.

THE FALL SHOW IS FAST APPROACHING

I know it's only July and most people aren't thinking about the fall show but October will be here before we know it. There have already been several meetings and behind the scene planning conducted while everyone is enjoying their summer. This year we will feature a large kids area and we need everyone to pitch in the help with this adventure. In this area we will build crystalline shapes, dig for fossils, classify rock types, conduct a Moh's hardness test, have a scavenger hunt, and do some fossil rubbings. This will be adjacent to the Flume, and the Fluorescent Room will be shifted into the area.

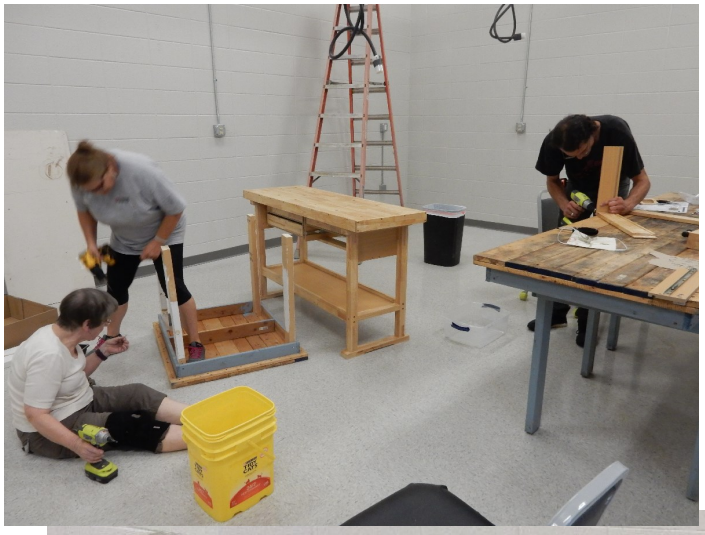
I'm asking everyone to please help out and volunteer for the show. I know things are uncertain right now but if you could commit to at least one shift it would really be appreciated. **I'm especially asking the younger population to help this year since they will be the main beneficiaries.**

We have several areas that need help:
Ticket booth - chaired by Nannette Schwartz nannette.schwartz.1@bc.edu
Information booth - chaired by Joe Bonin sixjsonef@yahoo.com
Flume - chaired by Gene Powers genepowersgddm@gmail.com
Demonstrations - chaired by Shelley Curran and Kathy Bowman
Kids Area - chaired by Judy Odsmunson artzjjjc@aol.com
Fossil/mineral dig - chaired by James Yack jamesgyack@gmail.com
Volunteer dinner - chaired by Caryl Nixon

Please contact me Theresa Chivers at 256-837-6819 or by email wolfsong929@gmail.com or any of the chairs listed if you would like to volunteer. **We can't hold this show without volunteers so please help.** If we all help with a shift or two then no one is really burdened with too much.
Thank you so much for your help!

Progress at the new Gem & Mineral Education Center

Work crews have been regularly gathering at the Center to construct benches for the saws and arbors, work tables for Metals and Rocket City Jewelers, and shelves for the storage rooms. There is still plenty left to finish before the Center opens next month, but we should be ready soon for an OPEN HOUSE.



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

We're continuing to hold our weekly online meetings every Wednesday, at 6:30p.m., starting a half hour later than normal so everyone can eat dinner or a snack before the meeting. Thank you, Karen, Theresa, and Judy 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!

On the 4th of July, Judy and Theresa moved the new tables, chairs, stools, steel storage cabinet, sink, and kitchen cabinetry to our room at the new **HGMS Education Center at 7901 Bailey Cove Road SE**, Huntsville. Many thanks to Judy & Jerry Osmundsen, and Theresa and Mike Chivers for their hard work.

Stay healthy everyone! 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@wildivystudio.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.

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

Realgar is an arsenic sulfide mineral with the formula As_4S_4. It's a soft (1.5 to 2 on Mohs scale) dark red to orange-red mineral with an orange, orange-red, or red streak. It occurs in monoclinic (a crystal system in which a crystal is described by 3 vectors of unequal length) crystals, or in granular, compact, or powdery form. The crystals have a resinous or greasy luster. **Warning:** It's toxic and carcinogenic. **Always** wash your hands after handling realgar, and avoid inhaling realgar dust.

Realgar is also known as "ruby sulphur" or "ruby of arsenic". The name realgar comes from the Arabic *rahj al-ġār*, meaning "powder of the mine", and Medieval Latin (the form of Latin spoken in Roman Catholic Western Europe during the Middle Ages). The earliest record of the word in English is in the 1390s.

In modern times, realgar was first described before 1959. But it was known as a mineral pigment in Byzantium (Asia Minor and the Balkan Peninsula) by the 13th century. Realgar and another arsenic mineral named orpiment (As_2S_3) were significant trade items as paint pigments in the ancient Roman Empire. Arsenic sulfide paint was used in fine art from China, India, Central Asia, and Egypt. It was also used in European fine art during the Renaissance, but the practice died out at the end of the 17th century

The ancient Greeks used realgar to make a medicine known as "Bull's Blood". The ancient Chinese used realgar in medicine, too, and they sprinkled it around their houses to repel insects and snakes. Beginning around 220 BC, as part of the Dragon Boat Festival, they consumed "realgar wine", a traditional alcoholic drink consisting of huangjiu ("yellow wine") laced with powdered realgar. It was believed that the drink would ward off evil, alluding to the repellent quality. Luckily, this practice is increasingly rare in modern times.

Realgar is most commonly found in low-temperature hydrothermal veins (cracks in Earth's crust near a heat source through which hot water and dissolved minerals flow). It's usually associated with calcite, barite, other arsenic minerals such as orpiment and arsenolite, and antimony minerals such as stibnite. It also occurs as volcanic sublimations (minerals that form directly from volcanic gas) and hot spring deposits such as the geyser deposits in Yellowstone National Park. The most notable occurrences of realgar in the United States are the Getchell and White Caps Mines in Nevada, and Green River in Washington.

It's interesting to note that after long exposure to sunlight, realgar breaks down to a yellow powder that was once thought to be yellow orpiment. But this powder, called *pararealgar*, is chemically identical to realgar. It turns out that realgar and pararealgar are *isomers* of As_4S_4. (Isomers are molecules having identical chemical formulas but with distinct arrangements of atoms in space.)

Realgar, orpiment, and another arsenic sulfide mineral called arsenopyrite (FeAsS), provide nearly all the world's supply of arsenic as a byproduct of smelting. Before it was known as carcinogenic, realgar was used in the leather industry to remove hair from animal pelts. Thankfully, it's rarely used for that purpose today. But it's still sometimes used to kill weeds, insects, and rodents. Realgar is rarely used in jewelry, but one exception I found is this "pod" ring by Anna Maa Designs in which a natural realgar crystal is enclosed by sterling silver formed from PMC (Precious Metal Clay).

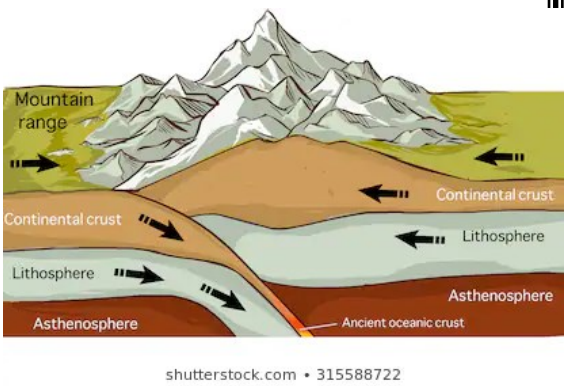
Perhaps the most well-known use of realgar is in the fireworks industry. Fireworks were originally invented in China to scare away evil spirits and to celebrate the Chinese New Year and the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival. Before powdered metals such as aluminum, magnesium, and titanium became available, realgar was used by firework manufacturers to create the color white. Today, realgar is used, in combination with potassium chlorate, to make a contact explosive called "red explosive" used in "torpedoes", "crackling stars", and other novelty fireworks, especially "cracker balls". China is still the largest manufacturer and exporter of fireworks in the world, with a major source of realgar from the Shimen Mine in Hunan Province.

Fireworks are used all over the world for cultural events, entertainment, and celebrations. In some countries, fireworks are even used in agriculture to scare away birds. In the United States, we traditionally celebrate the fourth of July (Independence Day) with public fireworks displays. Unfortunately, public displays were cancelled this year due to the concern about the spread of COVID-19. But if you live outside Huntsville city limits, as I do, all you really had to do to see fireworks, was sit back in your favorite lawn chair, and enjoy your neighbors' displays!

References: *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Realgar, https://www.mindat.org/min-3375.html*

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 -** August 27
3. Plateaus - September 24
4. Sedimentary Basins - October 22
   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.

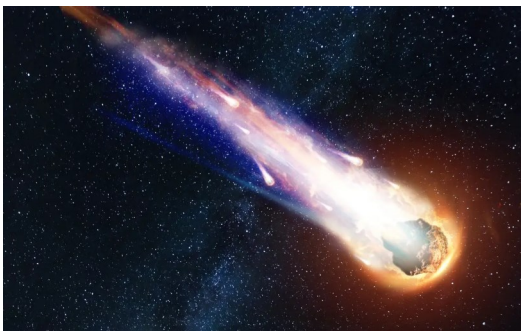
For more information, contact
Brian Burgess at bburgess771@gmail.com 256-479-2993
or Bill Friday bill.friday@earthlink.net 256-527-8227

GeoSciences

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

But we should be back in business for a GeoSciences meeting in August

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.



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

SHEET & WIRE STORAGE

The more you work with jewelry, the more problems you have finding the piece of metal you need. My pieces of sheet were generally stored in various plastic bags, and the wire was in separate coils. Few were marked, so it often took me a while to locate that piece of 26 ga fine sheet I bought last year, especially since I usually take my supplies back and forth to classes.

A tip from a friend helped me organize everything. I bought an expanding file folder from the office supplies store (the kind that has13 slots and a folding cover) and marked the tabs for each gauge of metal I use. Then I marked all my pieces of sheet with their gauge, put them in plastic bags, marked the gauge on the bag, and popped them into the folder. I usually store coils of wire loose in the folder, but they can also be bagged if you prefer. I use one tab for bezel wire and one for the odd, miscellaneous items.

The resulting folder is really convenient when I want to take my metal out to a class or workshop, and it's colorful enough for me to easily find in the clutter of the shop!

LITTLE BALLS

I often use little balls of silver and gold as accent pieces on my designs. They can be made as needed from pieces of scrap. Cut the scrap into little pieces, put them on a solder pad and melt them with a torch.
Then throw the balls into a small cup of pickle.

If you need to make all the balls the same size, you need the same amount of metal to melt each time. The best way to do that is to clip equal lengths of wire.

But there's an easier way to get a good supply of balls. Some casting grain comes in near perfect ball form. Just grab your tweezers and pick out the ones you need. When you need larger quantities of balls, pour the casting grain out onto a baking pan, tilt the pan a bit, and let all the round pieces roll to the bottom. Bag the good ones, and pour the rest back into your bag for casting. Balls can be sorted into different sizes using multiple screens.

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.

Iron Minerals By Dave Jacobson, Canaveral Gem & Mineral "Moonstone" Nov 2016

In going through some of my minerals I found several iron minerals. This month we will take a look at a few of these iron minerals. Most people who collect minerals have one or two of them in their collections.

Hematite, Fe2O3, iron oxide, is one of the more important iron ores and occurs in large sedimentary beds. It is a very common min-eral and can be found in many areas of the world. Hematite is an interesting mineral to collect because of the variety shapes and forms; from flower like crystal structures called "iron roses" to reniform clusters, sometimes called "kidney ore". Hematite is in the hexagonal crystal system. Its color is usually black or red with an earthy to metallic luster. Small tabular crystals may also be steel grey. One of the keys to identifying hematite is the red streak it leaves on a streak plate. The unglazed back side of a ceramic tile can be used as a streak plate. The hardness of crystalized hematite is 6.5 with a specific gravity of 5.3. It is also slowly soluble in hot concentrated hydrochloric acid, staining the solution an intense reddish-yellow.

Magnetite, FeFe2O4, iron oxide is another important iron ore. It is a common mineral in a great variety of rocks. It is in the isomet-ric crystal system forming in octahedrons or dodecahedrons with striated faces (striations not always see). It is opaque. Color is iron-black to gray-black Compact and massive material is iron black with bluish irridescence. Hardness is 5.5 to 6.5. Specific Gravity is 5.18. Streak is black Magnetite takes it's name from it's natural magnetism. Massive material has higher magnetism than crystalized specimens. Naturally magnetized pieces are also called "lodestones".

Goethite is hydrated iron oxide, FeO(OH). Important ore of iron which is also used in pigments. It is in the orthorhombic crystal system. It comes in prismatic and platy crystals. Goethite pseudomorphs after pyrite are found in many areas. Massive forms can be reniform, botryoidal and stalactic. The color can be yellow, brown and brownish red to black. Streak is brown, brownish yellow to orange yellow. Hardness is 5.5. Specific Gravity is 3.3 to 4.3. Goethite is named after the German author-scientist, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832).

Pyrite, is Iron Sulfide (FeS2). Pyrite is a sulfide mineral in the isometric crystal system. Most pyrite has a pale brass-yellow color with a metallic luster. Parallel striations are very common on the crystal faces. These striations are one of the features that helps in the identification of pyrite. Pyrite has a brittle to concoidal fracture with no cleavage. It has a hardness of 6 to 6.5, with a specific gravity of approximately 5. It's streak is greenish to brownish black. It is insoluble in hydrochloric acid, but powdered pyrite dis-solves in nitric acid. Powdered pyrite when heated gives off a sulfur smell and leaves a small Metallic, magnetic globule. Pyrite gets its name from the Greek, pyrites lithos, which means "stone which strikes fire. Pyrite will spark when hit with a piece of iron. Pyrite is a common mineral. Specimens are found in most mineral collections. Fossils from some locations have even been pyritized.

Another iron sulfide mineral is marcasite (FeS2). Marcasite is a polymorph of pyrite meaning it has the same chemistry but has dif-ferent structure and crystal shapes. Marcasite is difficult to differentiate from pyrite when distinctive crystals are not visible. Marca-site specimens will often disintegrate in collections giving off a strong sulfur smell. I know from personal experience . It is in the orthorhombic crystal system. Crystals can be tabular, bladed or prismatic. It also comes in massive, botryoidal, stalactitic and nodu-lar forms. Color is brassy yellow, sometimes with a greenish tint. Hardness is 6 to 6.5. Specific Gravity is 4.8. Streak is greenish black.

Siderite, FeCo3 is an iron carbonate mineral in the hexagonal crystal system. It varies in color from pale yellow to dark brown or almost black when large amounts of manganese is present. Rhombohedral crystals with curved striated faces are typical. Material can massive, course, fine grained and botryoidal. Crystals can be transparent or translucent with a vitreous to pearly luster. Hardness is 3.5 to 4. Specific Gravity 3.8 to 3.9. Streak is white. It's name comes from the Greek *sideros* for "iron" in reference to siderites composition. I've have touched on a few of the iron minerals. There are others I may write about in the future.

I used the following reference materials in preparing this article.

Field Guide to Rocks And Minerals by Frederick H. Pough.
Mineralogy for Amateurs by John Sinkankus.
Simon & Schusters Guide to Rocks And Minerals.
The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Rocks and Minerals.
Amethyst Galleries Mineral Gallery on the internet
http://http://www.galleries.com/

July Birthdays

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

August Birthdays

2 Lawrence Nelms
4 Brooks Glover
6 Devona Hawkins
10 Peggy Johnson
14 Kate Leonard
18 Will Bryan
18 Karen Ryan
19 Jimi Sitko
22 Brenda Reynolds
24 Karen Allen
25 Debora Neis
27 Carol J. Lee
28 Evan O'Dell
30 Tish Hall
31 Lauren McCullough

August
Peridot

Anniversaries

1 Clara & Mike Goode
3 Brian & Karen Allen
4 Florence Mims
9 Lowell & Betty Zoller
18 Julia & Steven Priest
25 Jim & Ola Ann Lee
28 Anita Bynum
28 Jerry Osmundson
31 Becky Rollston

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

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Auction Chair: Shelley Curran
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Field Trips: Open

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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

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
23 Feb ’21 Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm

Deadline for Next Newsletter
August 15, 2020

Dated Material
Do not Delay

July 2020

Rocket City Rocks & Gems
Bill Friday, Editor
2508 Excalibur Dr.
Huntsville, AL 35803