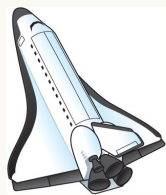


# ROCKET CITY ROCKS & GEMS



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

Volume 52 No. 11

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

November 2020

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Hiatus till further notice for:

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## **November 24th Meeting? - Not Happening But Thanksgiving Day Will Happen November 26th**



[www.huntsvillegms.org/](http://www.huntsvillegms.org/) - [www.facebook.com/HuntsvilleGMS](https://www.facebook.com/HuntsvilleGMS) -



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Happy Thanksgiving in advance! We do have a lot to be thankful about but in these times, it can be hard to remember all we have to be thankful for. As a club, we have definitely had a strange year! We could not hold our auction which is a major source of the funds we use to operate the shops. We had to cancel our annual show, which is the main outreach to the general public. You may have discovered us through our show and

decided to become part of our family. In any case, we are glad you are here! However, we were able to move into our new facilities in the old Grissom High School field house. So yes! We definitely have a lot to be happy about. So next year is around the corner and there are so many unknowns. But we are working hard to get back to normal with normal meetings. The groups are already getting back to normal with the lapidary, metals group, Rocket City Jewelers and Geo-Sciences, all meeting now. So come on out and explore ways to create, expand knowledge and just have fun!

Mike Harrison

HGMS President

### **Get your access code for the new facility**

Once the security keypad and magnetic latch are installed (soon!!) members will need a personal four-digit code for access. Please provide your chosen number to Bill Friday who will maintain the repository. Don't use simple progressions like 1-2-3-4. Birthdates are ok as long as they are unique. Duplicate requests will be arbitrated. All numbers will be entered into the computer which controls the door latch. They will be maintained for as long as members are active, but will be cancelled after a year's absence from HGMS activities. They may also be cancelled if members abuse their privileges.

### **Dues are Coming Due on Jan 1st**

**New Members and current Members who pay their dues now will be credited for all of 2021. Get ahead of the crowd and pay ahead.**

**Take a load off of the Membership Chairman.**

**Still \$15 single/\$20 Family**

### **Pebble Pups**

**Current plans are to re-start the Pebble Pups programs in January, allowing the virus problem to settle out further.** We will meet in the new Gem & Mineral Education Center at the old Grissom High facility in our own Room. Bring your friends. For more information, contact Bill Friday [bill.friday@earthlink.net](mailto:bill.friday@earthlink.net) 256-527-8227



## Metal Smithing/Silver Group by Kathy Bowman & Shelley Curran

The metal smith / silversmith studio is coming along nicely. Seven of the twelve jewelers benches are in, stocked with tools and being used. The vices are mounted to the forming table. The stumps are all set and the new mill is up and useable and soon to be mounted on the custom steel stand. Many thanks to all who helped.



Due to unforeseen circumstances Kathy and I have decided not to hold a formal class in December. The charm bracelet/ necklace project will be shifted to January 2021. This is a beginner to intermediate project that will strengthen your soldering skills. We will still have open studio time on Monday and Thursday from 6:00-9:00 pm. This might be the perfect time to finish up all those odds and ends or to get a jump start on your next project.

If you're interested in the January class (7th & 11th) please indicate which day you need or if you can be flexible when you sign up. Kit cost to be determined depending on materials.

Thanks and hope to see you in studio. Shelley

**Certification Classes:** We hope to resume certifications on a one to three person basis in January. If you are interested in scheduling Metalsmithing Certification please send your name and contact information (name, email address, and phone number) to [HGMS@wilddivystudio.com](mailto: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.

### Volunteer Positions \*

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.

## GeoSciences - Back in Business

Tom Burleson of the Von Braun Astronomical Society was finally able to present his program on Meteorites. We had 22 attendees, causing us to relocate from the GeoSciences Room to the Lapidary Room. We all wore our masks. Bruce Kowalczyk who usually hosts Thursday lapidary sessions was present for the show, so lapidary wouldn't have happened anyway.

Tom started with Meteor...., explaining that there are a number of astronomical and geological terms beginning with this word, and he worked his way through all of them - Meteor: a space rock falling through the atmosphere (a "Falling Star"); Meteorite: a space rock which has landed on the ground, Meteoroids, Meteor Craters, and more.

Meteor Showers were of particular interest, and there are several throughout the year which are notable and worth watching.

A number of attendees brought meteorites from their collections, although not all turned out to be genuine.

It was great to be back in business.





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

Now accepting reservations for the **Nefertiti Bracelet on Wed, Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>**. This bracelet involves creating a wire wrap design using bronze wire. The deadline to sign up is **Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>**. This is another opportunity to practice your wire working skills! This is also the last class of the year. The **Christmas party is Wed., Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>**. After that, we won't meet again until **Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021**.

Please note that the **Christmas Party is from 6-9pm**, not 2-5pm. We decided to order boxed dinners from a local restaurant due to concerns about sharing food. Bring your restaurant ideas to the Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, and we'll decide. Please also bring cash so we can start taking orders. If you can't attend the Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, you must contact Judy with your order by **Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>**.

Thanks to Theresa for starting an RCJ board on Pinterest! All RCJ members are invited to contribute ideas to the folders on this board. We'd like to see what jewelry you're interested in creating and/or teaching! Thanks also to Misty Cartee for donating jewelry catalogs to spark our creativity!

The supplies inventory is finished. We have an abundant supply of findings, beads, and baubles to use in our jewelry creations thanks mainly to generous donations from previous members and kindred spirits! If you'd like to have a look at our stash, please let me know on any "Finish It" night!

Remember that we meet from 6-9pm on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays, and 2-5pm on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays. (Meeting times for 5<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays are TBA.) This schedule will continue into 2021.

### Upcoming Schedule

**Nov 18:** 6-9pm, Chainmaille Santa Earrings and/or Pendant and Christmas Tree Earrings.

**Nov 25:** No mtg. Happy Thanksgiving! Deadline to RSVP for Nefertiti Bracelet. [Contact Judy \(205\) 541-7207](mailto:judy@rcj.com).

**Dec 2:** 6-9pm, Nefertiti Bracelet. Deadline to order boxed dinner. Contact Judy (205) 541-7207.

**Dec 9:** 6-9pm, Christmas Party.

**Dec 16, 23, 30:** Happy Holidays!

**Jan 6, 2021:** 6-9pm, First Class of 2021: Copper Focal Leather Bracelet.

**Important:** The **HGMS Education Center is located at 7901 Bailey Cove Road SE, Huntsville.**

Enter the South parking lot off Bailey Cove Road SE, drive through the lot to the Education Center (long narrow building) at the back, turn left, and park directly opposite the building. Please enter the double glass doors on the West side of the building. Please be aware that the doors will be unlocked for the first hour. After that, the doors will be locked, and you will need to call Judy (205-541-7207) to let you in.

### Volunteers:

Group Leader	Leslie Malakowsky
Instructors	Judy Osmundson, Leslie Malakowsky, Theresa Chivers
Treasurer	Clara Goode, Judy Osmundson
Facebook	open
Security	Judy Osmundson and Theresa Chivers (backup)

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.**





## How We Got Here – by A Cast of Hundreds

The rejuvenation of the Huntsville Gem & Mineral Society didn't start with our recent move to the old Grissom High School football field house. It goes all the way back to when Senior Center Director Tom Glynn started hosting Tuesday evening Bingo sessions in September 2011. We asked if we could open the lapidary lab at the same times, taking advantage of the building security being open and the HVAC going. Tom agreed, and in October we hosted the first ever evening lapidary session.

Up until then members under age 60 could only enjoy the monthly meetings – no lapidary access. Pebble Pups could only meet on those same nights and so Dianna O'Dell asked for help so she could hear some of the meeting programs.

Once our under-60 members could get into the lab, the place was jammed – 21 patrons in that small space for the third session. Every machine was being used, and those were the ancient ones, with stinky transformer oil in the saws, sanding belts on expanding drums, and two big leather polishing wheels. Machine maintenance was a constant nightmare. We did buy a new Lortone 14" slab saw, but it was never very satisfactory.



We asked for permission to also open the lapidary room on Wednesday evenings, which meant that we needed to get building keys and the code to turn off the security. Graciously Tom Glynn agreed and we had two nights of rock cutting available.

Soon after, some of our members expressed a desire to do more than cut and polish rocks – they wanted to make jewelry with them, so the Wednesday evening Jewelry group started, meeting in the Painting Room next to the lapidary lab.

The 2013 Fall Show at the Civic Center lost a pile of money on the last event there, and we moved it to the Jaycees. Much lower cost to support it, with half the vendors, twice the attendance, twice the member support, and a vendor appreciation dinner. The Jaycees remains a superior venue, bringing back the Rock Food Table, a Moon Rock, and we hosted the 2019 Southeast Federation Meeting.

Then we learned that we had too much money in our Show fund and had to spend the excess on all those new saws & arbors and on equipment for the Jewelry and new Metal Smithing group. Nancy Roberts and Mike Schuchs from the North Mississippi G&M came and retrieved our donation of the old machines. A peek at their Sep Nugget newsletter shows they are still using some of our old equipment. We advised them that a nice lapidary lab had been a key to our turn-around in membership growth. And it has been for them as well.



Pebble Pups was revived as a monthly program under the guidance of Brian Burgess. They met first in the old SciQuest building, and then the Space & Rocket Center, finally returning to the Senior Center. It rapidly grew with regular programs and some great field trips.

The GeoSciences Activity was created to answer the needs of members who had expressed interest on their membership application for fossils, geology, and Indian artifacts. What started as three separate offerings condensed into a single monthly program night. It has remained popular with programs which dig much deeper into subjects than is typical of monthly meeting programs.

It had been clear for some time that we really needed a larger space to host all of our activities, and more important to make daytime activities open to our under-age-60 members. Tom Glynn interceded with the City Public Works Department to make the old Grissom High football field house available to the HGMS. Our first visit drew quite a mixed reaction—the place was a horrible mess, but it was BIG, and had several rooms to house our various activities, and restrooms (sort of). The HGMS membership voted to accept the offer and the City set to work.

The next time we saw the place, it had been completely renovated, taking into account some of our requests for specific changes. Taking advantage of “The Virus” shutdown, we dismantled all of our equipment at the Senior Center and moved into the new space last June. We are still adjusting to our various needs with new equipment, storage, and utilities, but are quite pleased with the new home.

The year hasn't been a total waste in another category. We have welcomed over a dozen new members and have enticed some of our “retired” members to return and become active.

## Mineral of the Month – Willemite

By Leslie A. Malakowsky



This month's mineral was inspired by one of the most popular attractions at our annual Gem, Jewelry, and Mineral Show (which unfortunately had to be canceled this year) – the fluorescent display in the black light tent. Willemite is one of the main minerals in the display. It fluoresces green under shortwave ultraviolet (UV) light. (Fluorescent minerals emit visible light when they are exposed to UV light. The glow stops when the UV light is turned off.)

Willemite is a zinc silicate mineral with the formula  $\text{Zn}_2\text{SiO}_4$ . Willemite is a member of

the phenakite group of nesosilicates (minerals characterized by isolated silicate tetrahedra that are bound to each other by positively-charged elements). The two other minerals in the phenakite group are phenakite and eucryptite. Other nesosilicates include the more familiar garnet, kyanite, olivine, topaz, and zircon.

Willemite crystals can have a fibrous, botryoidal (globular, resembling a bunch of grapes), or massive (shapeless, no external crystal shape) appearance. In daylight, they occur in a variety of colors ranging from colorless, white, gray, black, pastel green, apple-green, light blue, azure-blue, yellow, honey-yellow, flesh-red, burgundy-red, pink, brown, dark brown, to mahogany-brown. (Willemite that occurs in solid brown masses is called *trostite*, named after the Dutch-American mineralogist Gerard Troost who was the first to recognize it.)

This mineral was discovered in 1829 in a Belgian mine called Vieille-Montagne (French for “old mountain”) by a student at the University of Liège. He gave some samples to Abailard “Armand” [Lévy](#), a teacher at the university. Lévy named the mineral in 1830 in honor of King William I (1813-1840) of the Netherlands (later called Belgium), in gratitude for being granted a Professorship at the university. Hence the Vieille-Montagne mine is the mineral's *type locality*.

Willemite occurs all over the world, but the most well known localities in the United States are the Franklin and Sterling Hill Mines in New Jersey. Willemite from those mines often occurs with red zincite (zinc oxide) and franklinite (an iron-rich zinc mineral that occurs in sharp black octahedral crystals and masses). You can distinguish willemite from zincite and franklinite because those minerals do not fluoresce under UV light.

Willemite forms when rocks rich in sphalerite (a zinc carbonate mineral and the main ore of zinc) oxidize (undergo chemical alteration) in a silica-rich environment. It may also form when hemimorphite or sphalerite undergoes metamorphism in hydrothermal veins. Willemite is commonly associated with calcite, fluorite, hemimorphite, limonite, quartz, and wolfenite. Crystal twinning (in which two separate crystals share some of the same lattice points) is rare in willemite, but at least one willemite *trilling* has been found in Franklin, New Jersey.

Willemite is a minor ore of zinc, and it was used in early fluorescent tubes.

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



## Biggs, Blue Biggs, Deschutes, and Beers Mountain Jaspers



Biggs Jasper



Blue Biggs Jasper



Deschutes Jasper



Beers Mountain Jasper

Biggs Junction, Oregon, is a well-known producer of some of the finest picture jaspers in the world. Any Northwest rockhound who has been around for a while knows what Biggs, Blue Biggs, China Hollow, and Deschutes jaspers look like, and many have specimens gracing their collections. The area where the different jasper outcrops occur is called the Biggs triangle. The area extends from the Deschutes River mouth to Rufus Oregon, which is east of Biggs Junction, and then on to China Hollow.

**Biggs, Blue Biggs, Deschutes and China Hollow** are varieties of "picture jasper" that exhibit particular patterns and colors – and are used as opaque gemstones. They exhibit intricate, shell- or layer-like patterns in shades of brown ranging from beige to dark brown. They were first found in the 1960s, particularly during road works in 1966 when U.S. Route 97 was relocated through a canyon south of Biggs Junction. Road workers found the jasper in a rock cut, collected it and sold it to rock shops. This brought the attractive stone to the attention of collectors, who began to seek for it in the Biggs Junction area.

These jaspers are found between two of the basalt lava flows that once covered the states of Oregon, Washington and parts of Idaho. Many thousands of years passed between the individual flows, allowing life to flourish. During this time, the volcanic ash decomposed into clay and was deposited by rain water in streams and lakes atop the cooled basalt. There it mixed with silica and iron from the weathering of the then-recent igneous rocks, forming a plastic colloid.

When lava next flowed over it, the heat and pressure transformed the muddy mixture. As water escaped in the form of superheated steam, pressure variations resulted in flexation and many short fluctuating changes, reflected in the jasper's many thin contoured bands. The hydrothermal reaction progressed as a shock wave through the mud, removing iron from it and depositing the iron as intertwining bands of limonite. The altered rock remained plastic, and subject to local movement as a result of pressure changes. These caused the great variety of marbled, rosette-like and picture designs found in Biggs jasper.

The jasper deposits are exposed at several locations where erosion from multiple floods of the Columbia River have eroded the deposits from within walls of canyons. One notable occurrence is in the road cut south of US Hwy 97 and south of Biggs Junction, where both classic Biggs and Blue Biggs appear.

A new mine is being developed in the area by a man named Jay Carlson, who assumed management for both Don's China Hollow operation and this new locality near Rufus Oregon he named Beers Mountain. What makes this jasper unique when compared to other types of Biggs is its color and delicate banding. Color wise it somewhat resembles Deschutes jasper but is generally more orange. The patterning on this material is unique, however. Whereas the other types of Biggs jasper tend to have larger and more open patterns with wider bedding lines, the Beers Mountain jasper reminds of high quality thinly banded slate. On some of the pieces, black dendrites are also showing.

Deschutes Jasper is no longer available to dig, due to being included in the property of a park that is a few hundred yards away at the mouth of the Deschutes river.

As these jaspers are an opaque, microcrystalline form of quartz, they are hard and take an excellent polish.

### Sources:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biggs\\_jasper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biggs_jasper)

<https://www.barlowsgems.net/deschutes-jasper-cabochons/>

<https://www.rockngem.com/something-new-at-biggs-junction/>

## November Birthdays

1 Marty Martinez	13 Cindy Bonds
2 Daniel Hessler	15 Gordon Maynard
3 Alice Turner-Johnson	16 Sandy Charlton
3 Andrea Tucker-Kusister	17 John McCullough
3 Nanette Schwartz	20 Betty Augsburg
3 Chris Stewart	21 Doug Wells
6 Sherrie Bonin	24 Frank Curran
7 Susan Elrod	26 Connor Staggs
7 Amelia Walley	27 Toni Robert
9 David Fikes	27 Betty Olson
9 Jim Lee	27 Sheila Cape
12 Mike Soroczak	30 Mary Jean Brost Travis



**November**  
Topaz

1 Frank & Shelley Curran  
26 Debbie Deering  
26 Bill & Rita Friday  
29 Mike & Theresa Chivers  
Bruce & Allison Kowalczyk

## December Birthdays

1 George Detwiler	12 Kathy Bowman
1 Judy Osmundson	14 Shelley Curran
1 James Yack	22 Jersey Sitko
3 Seth Walley	23 David Wyatt
4 Florence Mims	26 Bob Kemper
6 Lynn Peete	27 Alicia Detwiler
6 Becky Rollston	29 Angela Gilliam
9 Erika Walley	30 Nancy Davis
	31 Hayley Nedbalski



December  
Zircon

## Anniversaries

17 Darell & Phyllis Murphy  
26 Hayley Nedbalski & Avery Crawford

**The Lapidary Lab will be only limited open 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

**The lapidary equipment is reassembled and operational but still in the shakedown stage. But until the virus restrictions are relaxed, it is not practical to post a schedule. Current plans are to maintain the open lab for all qualified members ages 18+ on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings, starting December 1st.**

**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 &amp; MINERAL SOCIETY OFFICERS

President- Mike Harrison - [william.m.harrison@boeing.com](mailto:william.m.harrison@boeing.com)Vice President- Isabel Leon y Leon- [isabel.leonyleon@gmail.com](mailto:isabel.leonyleon@gmail.com)Recording Secretary: Ruth Kemper- [bob\\_kemper@yahoo.com](mailto:bob_kemper@yahoo.com)Treasurer: Clara Goode, 256-883-9194 - [claragoode1@comcast.net](mailto:claragoode1@comcast.net)Newsletter Editor: Bill Friday - 256-527-8227 - [bill.friday@earthlink.net](mailto:bill.friday@earthlink.net)

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Show Publicity Chair - Tony Smith

[tsmith@erc-incorporated.com](mailto:tsmith@erc-incorporated.com)

Show Treasurer: Clara Goode, 256-883-9194

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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](http://www.Huntsvillegms.org), at meetings, or the lab

**MEETING PLACE:** 7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm.

**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](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)



## 2020-21 CALENDAR

24 Nov '20 - HG&MS Meeting cancelled

Dec '20 - Annual HGMS Christmas Dinner won't happen this year

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

27 Mar '21 - Annual HGMS Fundraising Auction  
Jaycees Bldg, 2180 Airport Rd, Huntsville AL

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

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

26 Jun '21 - Tentative date for Annual Picnic - details to be worked out

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

<p>Deadline for Next Newsletter December 7, 2020</p>
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**Dated material  
Do not delay**

November 2020

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