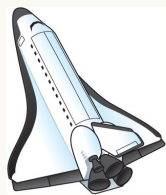


ROCKET CITY ROCKS & GEMS



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

Volume 52 No. 12

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

December 2020

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Open House, G&M Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd, Hsv
Tuesday Dec 15th, Come & Go 4:00 –9:00
Info, Maps & GPS Page 3



Merry Christmas

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



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Happy Holidays to all!

As we bring this year to a close, I personally wish every one of you reading this a very happy holiday! I think this is where I'm supposed to recap this year and say how great it has been. I do hope it has been a great year for you individually, but with the pandemic, I don't think anyone had a "normal" year. Here at HGMS, we overcame in spite of it all. We moved into our new facilities (thanks to the city of Huntsville for the facilities and to all the wonderful volunteers who did all of the hard work), adjusted to a new normal, and kept in touch as best we could. We are in the process of hammering out a new budget and setting new priorities. Even with limited funds starting out, we are optimistic that we can provide our membership with the activities you deserve. Maybe not all that we did before but as close to it as we can. The groups are as close to normal as possible, so come out and do lapidary, jewelry and metal smithing with us! Also get involved with the GeoSciences group and Pebble Pups! And we hope to start our monthly meetings soon too!

One last thing, be sure to look for the slate of officers in this issue and vote on them per the directions attached. As always, your vote and opinion counts!

And Happy New Year!

Mike Harrison

Officer Nominations Slate for 2021—only one former officer * is being replaced

Please return your votes to Mike Harrison at the email above or phone 256-797-2435 by Jan 6, 2021

President -Mike Harrison

william.m.harrison@boeing.com

Newsletter Editor - Bill Friday

bill.friday@earthlink.net 256-527-8227

Vice President - Isabel Leon y Leon

isabel.leonyleon@gmail.com

Directors at Large:

Secretary - Amber Robinson*

electricmagnolia@gmail.com

Michael Soroczak— soroczak@yahoo.com

Gene Powers - genepowersgddm@gmail.com

Treasurer - Clara Goode

claragoode1@comcast.net

Les Bartel - lester.bartel@gmail.com

Federation Liaison - Bill Friday

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

Apologies for the late invitation.

We realize that many folks will have other plans for the evening, but this is the best we could do for us to enjoy a December gathering.

We have been waiting for the secure keypad access system to be installed, and it mostly is.

The keypad itself still doesn't work but Koorsen is committed to getting it operational very soon.

The event will be Tuesday Dec 15th. Come-And-Go, from 4:00 to 9:00.

Light (packaged) snacks will be offered, with soft drinks served by a host.

Maps below. The address is 7901 Bailey Cove Rd, behind the old Grissom High School.

GPS 34.6607132 / -86.5388947 or 34° 39' 38.58" / 86° 32' 22.31"

RSVP is not required, but would be appreciated. Bring your friends.

The doors will be open, no 4-digit code required for this event, although a sign-in sheet will be in place.

I will be collecting membership dues for 2020 and personal access codes from any who want to have join any of the HGMS activities later.

Masks will be required, and groups of well-wishers will be asked to keep them smallish, i.e. move around and look the place over.

There will be no rock cutting or polishing going on, nor metal brazing, nor jewelry fashioning, but each area will be open for your inspection with a host to explain it all.

Besides touring the new facility, we will have a few sales opportunities.

Shelley Curran will have some of the nicer selections from the Auction on view for sale.

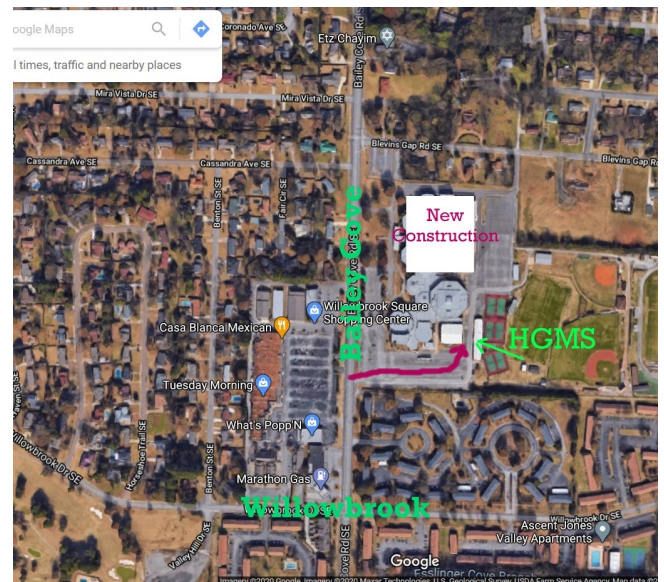
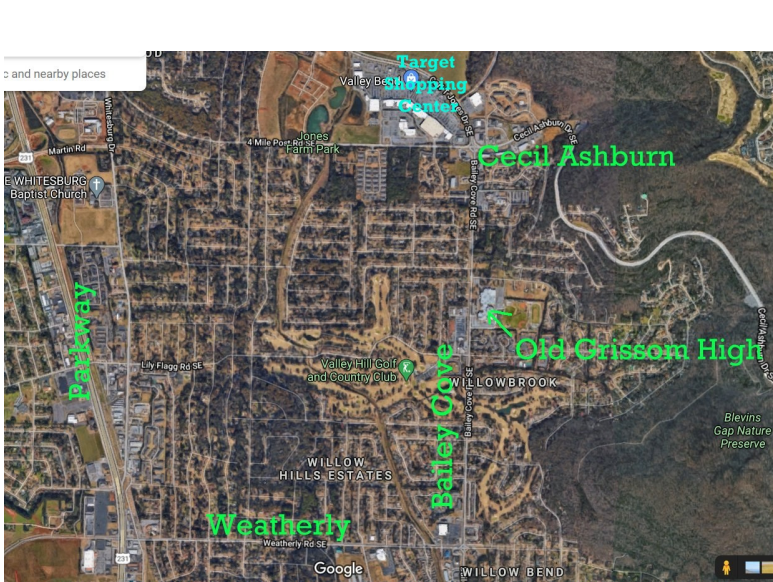
There are several pieces of lapidary equipment, most needing cleaning. Make a bid.
Proceeds going to the projects for which the lost Auction would have supported.

Jim Lacefield's book Lost Worlds in Alabama Rocks will be available for purchase. \$30

Gordon Jones will have some of his beautiful rocks – lapis, emerald, rubies, tourmaline, aquamarine.

From the Parkway, go east on Airport Rd / Carl T. Jones, continue on Bailey Cove Rd.

If you have questions, email me or call me at 256-527-8227



Editor's Note



That is actually Walt Kelly, creator of the cartoon Pogo, not me as I don't smoke cigars.

It has been the strangest of years, full of fear and courage, worry and optimism, isolation and a few good gatherings, working from home and working in the midst of the virus' victims. We aren't out of it yet, but hopefully the fear, worry, and isolation parts of it will fade quickly.

This month completes my fourteenth year as your newsletter editor, and the good news is that I still enjoy churning them out month after month. Every editor's worry is how to fill the space for a dozen blank pages (that is how many can go for a single first class stamp). As the new activities have come along, dedicating pages to Metals, Rocket City Jewelry, Pebble Pups, Geo Sciences, Mineral of the Month, and Brad Smith, it has actually gotten a bit tight fitting everything into there. I once enjoyed writing articles, but gave it up to make way for Leslie's contributions (no hard feelings at all).

Keeping up with memberships, birthdays and anniversaries spurred me to improve my Excel skills, which has spilled over into many other areas of my hobbies. Switching from Word to Publisher had a learning curve, but once I mastered it, I'll never go back to Word. So as long as you will have me in this position, and as long as I feel that I'm still capable of maintaining the quality and of presenting what this amazing organization is doing, I'll keep on keeping on. Thanks for your support and encouragement. Bill Friday, Editor

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.

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 256-527-8227



Metal Smithing/Silver Group by Kathy Bowman & Shelley Curran

January Project Class. Skill level beginning-Intermediate

Charm Bracelet/ Necklace

Thursday, January 7th and Monday the 11th.

Skills Built: Soldering! Soldering! Soldering!

Design and planning

Using the Jump Ringer tool

Using the acetylene torch

Chain making

Finishing

Fabricate a Sterling silver paper clip chain and clasp. In addition make three to five charms in various mixed metals with or without stones.

Several types of chain will be demonstrated but for this project we will do the paper clip chain.

Examples of charms will be provided but students are strongly encouraged to use their imaginations and their own designs. This class will take more than the standard three hour time frame. As always students will be able to use open studio time to complete their project.

Kits are available for \$10.00 or use your own material. You'll need 18 g round wire.

Kits will include enough silver to make 8" of chain and a clasp. Base metal sheet and wire are included. You may also choose one stone or bead from an assortment. Extra silver will be available for purchase if you wish but isn't required to complete the project.

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. 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—No program for December
January to be worked out—updates as available



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

2020 has been a challenging year! Luckily, we were able to stay in touch with each other during the COVID-19 shutdown using “video chatting” technology. It was great to connect with each other from week to week, even if we just visited and shared a little of our daily lives! At the same time, we managed to move into our new room in the new HGMS Education Center thanks to the hard work and dedication of many volunteers. We also welcomed 4 new members this year, despite the pandemic!

We’ve made some changes to make it easier to see what’s going on in RCJ. The schedule of upcoming classes, including photos, is posted on a bulletin board in our room in addition to our page on the HGMS website. You can also see photos of finished projects and projects we want to make on our new Pinterest board.

We finished our chainmaille Santas on December 2nd, and some of us can now make them in our sleep (you know who you are)! Six of us made it to the end-of-the-year Christmas party on December 9th! Remember that we’re not meeting on December 16th, 23rd, and 30th.

Our first meeting of 2021 will be from 6-9pm on Jan. 6th. Please note that we’re now taking reservations for the **Jan. 6th project** – a hammered copper infinity symbol on a leather bracelet. Contact Judy (205) 541-7207 by **Wed., Dec. 30th** to sign up for this class.

Wishing you all safe and happy holidays! Looking forward to seeing you on January 6th!

Upcoming Schedule

Dec. 16, 23, 30: Happy Holidays!

Dec. 30: Deadline to sign up for Jan. 6th class.

Jan. 6, 2021: 6-9pm, Copper Focal Leather Bracelet.

Jan. 13: 2-5p, Finish it, open.

Jan. 20th: 6-9pm, Chainmaille: Bead in a Box and Elf Star.



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)

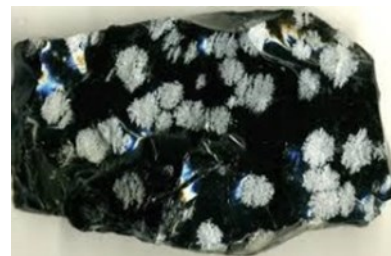
RCJ is open to **every member** of the HGMS. (Gentlemen, too!) If you love making jewelry, please join us! All skill levels are welcome! Please note that when you’d like to take a class but you don’t regularly attend RCJ, **you must contact us one week prior to the class** so we can make a kit for you.

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.

Mineral of the Month – Snowflake Obsidian

By Leslie Malakowsky

Obsidian is mineral-like, but it is not a true mineral. It's a naturally occurring *volcanic* glass that forms as an extrusive igneous rock. (Glass is an amorphous, homogeneous material with a random liquid-like structure that generally forms due to rapid cooling.) Obsidian is sometimes classified as a *mineraloid*, a mineral-like substance that does not display crystallinity. Obsidian is a mixture of cryptocrystalline grains of silica minerals in a glass-like suspension, a super-cooled liquid. In the last stages of volcanic eruptions, when most of the other elements and the water in the lava are burned up, ejected or have flowed out, the remaining material chills at surface temperatures.



“Snowflake” obsidian is a variety of obsidian that is usually black with white, off-white or light brown snowflake-shaped crystal patches of the mineral [cristobalite](#). Cristobalite is a silica polymorph (the ability of a solid material to exist in multiple forms or crystal structures) that, in the case of snowflake obsidian, forms as crystals or spherulites during partial crystallization as the glass cools. Other names for this variety of obsidian are “flowering” obsidian and “spherulitic” obsidian.

Obsidian was named after the Roman explorer Obsius because of its resemblance to a stone he found in Ethiopia that he named *obsianus lapis*. And the English translation of [Natural History](#), an early encyclopedia originally written in Latin by Pliny the Elder, includes a few sentences about a volcanic glass called Obsidian.

Obsidian is commonly found within the margins of rhyolitic lava flows known as obsidian flows. Rhyolite is an igneous, volcanic rock of felsic composition. “Felsic” refers to rock that is rich in minerals that form feldspar and quartz. (Typically the silicon dioxide (SiO₂) content of felsic rocks is greater than 70%.) The high silica content induces the lava to have high viscosity and polymerization (a chemical process that binds molecules together with a tendency to form glass and semicrystalline structures rather than crystals) that causes the obsidian to be hard and brittle. That is why obsidian has a conchoidal fracture with very sharp edges.

Obsidian is found all over the world; any place that has experienced rhyolitic volcanic eruptions. In the [United States](#) this includes [Arizona](#), [Colorado](#), [Idaho](#), [New Mexico](#), North Carolina, [Oregon](#), Pennsylvania, [Texas](#), [Utah](#), Virginia, and [Washington](#).

No obsidian has been found that is older than the Cretaceous age. This is because obsidian is [metastable](#) (a condition in which the material spends an extended time in a configuration other than its state of least energy) at the Earth's surface, and over time it becomes fine-grained mineral crystals. When newly formed, [obsidian](#) has a low water content, typically less than 1% water by weight. Over time, when exposed to groundwater, it becomes progressively hydrated forming perlite.

Historically, obsidian was used in cutting and piercing tools such as arrowheads, scrapers and blades. Analyses of ancient obsidian artifacts is instrumental in understanding prehistoric cultures. Today, obsidian is used by some surgeons for [scalpel](#) blades, although this is not approved by the [US Food and Drug Administration](#) (FDA) for use on humans. Obsidian is also carved for ornamentation, and it is a favorite gemstone for jewelry making.

References: [en.wikipedia.org](#), [mindat.org](#)

Solarized Glass

Certain types of colorless, transparent glasses, when exposed to sunlight for extended periods of time, develop a pink or pale purplish color. Bottles, insulators, and other objects having their color changed in this way are often called "desert glass," but the scientist prefers the term "solarized glass." Other well-known examples are the famous purplish windows on Beacon Street in Boston and the little circular glass disks sometimes found in sidewalks of older parts of cities. Occasional examples of solarized glass are also found from the ancient world.

Color from Impurities

The major constituent of most glasses is silica, which is usually introduced as a raw material in the form of sand. Although silica itself is colorless in glass, most sands contain iron as an impurity, and this imparts a greenish tint to glass. (In ancient times, glassmakers used very impure sands, with iron contents higher than those of sands used today, so most ancient glasses have a pronounced greenish color.)

Decolorizers (Manganese Dioxide)

Streetlight globes that have solarized to a purple color. Note that the screw threads have not turned purple because they were shielded from sunlight by the metal fixture.



By adding certain other ingredients to a molten glass, it is possible to offset the greenish color and produce colorless glasses. Such ingredients are known as decolorizers, and one of the most common is manganese dioxide (MnO_2). In chemical terms, the manganese acts as an oxidizing agent and converts the iron from its reduced state (which is a strong greenish blue colorant) to an oxidized state (which has a yellowish, but much less intense, color). In the course of the chemical reaction, the manganese goes into a chemically reduced state which is virtually colorless.

Manganese dioxide is believed to have been first used as a decolorizer as early as about the second century B.C. It was probably introduced as the mineral pyrolusite. From Roman times onward, glasses often contain about 0.5% to 1.0% manganese oxide (MnO). Later on, manganese dioxide (MnO_2) was sometimes called "glassmakers' soap."

If pieces of decolorized glass containing reduced manganese are exposed to ultraviolet light for long periods of time, the manganese may become photo-oxidized. This converts the manganese back into an oxidized form, which, even in rather low concentrations, imparts a pink or purplish color to glass. The ultraviolet rays of the sun can promote this process over a matter of a few years or decades, thus accounting for the color of desert glass. The effect has been reproduced in the laboratory.

Other Decolorizers (Selenium and Cerium)

Other chemical elements that are subject to photo-oxidation can also undergo color changes in glasses when exposed to ultraviolet light. Since about the turn of the century, some of these, such as selenium and cerium, were occasionally used as decolorizer and therefore can produce solarization colors, just as manganese does. The colors developed by these two elements are said to range from yellow to amber.

35 Centuries of Glass Galleries

Glass has always been found in nature, but the first glass created by humans can be dated to about 4,000 years ago, when craftsmen working in Mesopotamia, the land between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, discovered the art of mixing sand, soda, and lime to make glass.

The methods used to shape ancient glass consisted of heating it in open molds (casting). Some of the earliest works in the Museum's collection, such as a pendant cast in the shape of a fertile woman, and a portrait of Pharaoh Akhenaten, exemplify these early manufacturing efforts. Another glass making technique, called core forming, involved covering a mud core with glass, then removing the hardened mud to create a hollow vessel. The majority of glass objects made during this early period have been found in Mesopotamia and Egypt.

Glass was considered a luxury item and was reserved for the upper classes. Glass objects were used for personal



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>



TEMPLATES

Whenever I have to make more than 2-3 exact copies of a sheet metal component, I think of making a template. Templates let me easily draw the shape of an item to cut out.

Art stores or online sources like cooltools.us/ and kingsley-north.com/ sell templates for common shapes like circles, ovals, hearts, etc. but for nonstandard shapes, I make my own out of a scrap of sheet plastic or sheet metal. My preference is brass. I carefully lay out the shape using a steel ruler, a set of dividers, a scribe, and a fine center punch.

One example is the brass template in the pic below that let's me quickly trace the design of ginkgo leaf earrings onto silver sheet. Another is the nickel template which makes it easy to drill a pattern of holes for pin inlay into wooden handles.



OCHRE APPLICATOR

Yellow ochre is used when you want to be sure the solder won't flow on an area of your piece while you're soldering another area. The only problem with ochre is coming up with a good way to store and apply it.

I use recycled nail polish bottles. They seal well and have a built-in brush applicator. Just clean them out with a little acetone or nail polish remover, and they're ready to go.

Wishing you happy holidays.
Hopefully 2021 will be a better year.



- Brad Smith
BradSmithJewelry@gmail.com

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

Anniversaries



December
Zircon

17 Darell & Phyllis Murphy
26 Hayley Nedbalski & Avery Crawford

January 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



January
Garnet

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 & 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
 Treasurer: Clara Goode, 256-883-9194 - claragoode1@comcast.net
 Newsletter Editor: Bill Friday - 256-527-8227 - bill.friday@earthlink.net
 Directors at Large:
 Gene Powers - genepowersgddm@gmail.com
 Michael Soroczak- soroczak@yahoo.com
 Les Bartel - lester.bartel@gmail.com
 Ex Officio - bill.friday@earthlink.net

2020 COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Membership: Bill Friday— 256-527-8227 bill.friday@earthlink.net 2508 Excalibur Dr. Huntsville AL 35803 Publicity: Bob Kemper bob_kemper@yahoo.com Webpage: Leslie Malakowsky, lmalakowsky@gmail.com Auction Chair: Shelley Curran curranshelley1@gmail.com Field Trips: Open Rocket City Jewelers: Leslie Malakowsky 256) 755-0479 lmalakowsky@gmail.com Hospitality: Vacant Mineral ID: Michael Soroczak soroczak@yahoo.com (William Holland offers a class for this)	Property: Michael Cape macape@knology.net Program Chair—Mike Harrison william.m.harrison@boeing.com Show Chair: Tony Smith, 256-603-3095. tsmith@erc-incorporated.com Show Vendor Chair: Lowell Zoller, 256-534-8803 Lzol@comcast.net Show Volunteer Chair: Theresa Chivers, 256-837-6819 wolfsong929@gmail.com , Show Publicity Chair - Tony Smith tsmith@erc-incorporated.com Show Treasurer: Clara Goode, 256-883-9194 clarag1964@gmail.com
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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: 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

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

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





2020-21 CALENDAR



- 15 Dec '20 - Open House at the Gem & Mineral Education Center 4:00—9:00
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL
- 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



Deadline for Next Newsletter
January 16, 2020



**Dated material
Do not delay**

December 2020

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