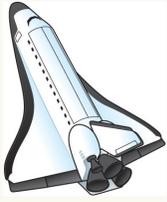


ROCKET CITY ROCKS & GEMS



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

Volume 55 No. 1

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

January 2023

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HGMS Membership Meeting January 24, 6:00

At Last

International Space Station—Matt McCollum

Matt is a NASA employee who has worked on the design, implementation, upgrades, and international coordination of the Space Station since the project began. He will describe the structure of the vehicle itself, the experiments which have been and still are ongoing in this amazing satellite.



Web Page - www.huntsvillegms.org/ email - hsvgems@gmail.com



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Membership News from Theresa Chivers, Membership Chair

This year we have 292 family/single memberships with 417 adults and 132 kids signed up. We are growing in all areas and I want to thank all that renewed their memberships at the show. Please remember that your membership dues are due in January, \$20 for single and \$25 for family. Remember a family is two adults living in the same household, dependent children under 19 are included as well as any dependent college students. Prompt payment is appreciated. If you signed up at the show then your dues for 2023 are covered.

The Lapidary Lab has a new toy - a Ring Saw. It is self contained with a water sump so it doesn't need access to a water supply or drain. There is a learning curve so if you want to use it, you need to request access, and it will be made available, with instructions as to how to use it. This is specifically for cutting custom shapes. The blade is round, so it allows free movement in any direction, but it is rather slow. Regular shapes should still be cut on the regular saws.

The Taurus 3 Diamond Ring Saw is a professional level diamond ring saw! The unusual 5-3/4" ring blade has diamonds on all sides (not just on the front of the blade) so the blade cuts in any direction. And the stainless steel ring blade is ridged, so it doesn't 'flex' or 'float' like bandsaw blades. The saw has a powerful 1/5 horse power motor.

The saw has a convenient opening side housing for easy access to blade, belt and motor. The large 18" x 12" work surface can easily be removed for cleaning. It also has a hand-held feature, that allows you to remove motor saw unit from the saw case for hand scroll work. Improved heavy-duty drive system provides reduced maintenance. It has an oversized 18" x 12" work surface, flip-up face shield and built-in light system. The unit comes with a standard ring blade mounted on the saw and we have one extra standard blade.

Other blades are available for purchase at around \$80 each, but are not yet in the lab. If a need arises they can be ordered.

The standard Taurus diamond ring saw blade is .070"/80 grit for use on glass, tile and stone. All Taurus 3 ring saw blades include replacement grommets (2 orange grommets in each blade pack).

The separating 'snap-apart' .070"/80 blade allows you to insert the blade into a drilled hole. This lets you cut a piece out of the middle of material without having an 'entry-cut' from the edge

The Slim "jeweler's" blade is .050"/80 grit is designed for very detailed, fine cutting work. The slim blade thickness of .050" is about 30% thinner than the standard ring blades.

The Slim/Fine 'Dichro' blade is .050"/120 grit is designed for intricate work with less waste and very fine grit for less chipping. It is intended for use on dichroic glass, iridescent glass, jewelry, etc.



Back in the old days, at the Senior Center - Thank You Jim Tredway, You are greatly missed.

Good teacher and good friend, Col. (Ret.) James Dale Tredway, Sr. of Huntsville, born May 30, 1933, passed away at home on Thursday, December 22, 2022, after a lengthy period of declining health. Besides his various other involvements, Jim spent many hours at the Lapidary Lab, teaching the lapidary arts, teaching wire wrapping, helping maintain equipment, and being a friend.



Rocket City Jewelers (RCJ) News

Happy New Year! RCJ is open to all HGMS members 16 and older. All skill levels are welcome! We've been busy planning classes for 2023! We've already made Wire-Wrapped Pendants and a Chainmaille Heart Pendant. **Here are the remaining classes for the 1st Quarter:**



- Feb 1: Layered Earrings w/punch and stamps
 Feb 15: Elf Star Pendant (Bring 3 of Your Own 8mm beads)
 Mar 1: Aztec Double Woven Bracelet. Personal orders for wire will be taken.
 (Practice Weaving Kit available)
 Mar 15: St. Patrick Earrings

Meeting Times/Reservations:

We meet for Classes from 6p-9p on 1st and 3rd Wednesdays.

We meet for Make Up/Finish Up from 2p-5p on 2nd, 4th and 5th Wednesdays.

Classes will be posted quarterly in this newsletter and signups will begin for each respective quarter in: Nov - 1st Quarter, Feb - 2nd Quarter, May - 3rd Quarter, Aug - 4th Quarter.

Our classroom holds 16-20 students. Overflow may carry over to our Make Up/Finish Up days. The doors will be unlocked for the first hour. After that, the doors will be locked, and you will need to call Judy or Theresa to let you in.

Signup sheets will be available in class, at HGMS meetings, or contact Theresa Chivers at: rocketcityjewelers@gmail.com

NOTE: If you are signed up for a class, you are responsible for the cost of that class and for attending. We send out texts and/or emails often. Some kind of reply is necessary, please.

NEW POLICY: Anyone who has missed more than 1 class without prior notification, will be placed on a wait list for the next class they are interested in. If there is room available, they will be notified 1 week prior to that class.

Volunteers:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Point of Contact/Kit Reservations/Security: | Theresa Chivers |
| Instructors: | Judy Osmundson, Theresa Chivers, Leslie Malakowsky |
| Kit Manager/Treasurer/Security: | Judy Osmundson |
| Membership/Publicity/Inventory: | Leslie Malakowsky |



Metal Smithing/Silver Group by Kathy Bowman & Shelley Curran

February Metals Class

Low Tech Casting. Thursday February 2nd and Monday the 6th, 5:00-9:00PM Kit Fee: \$8.00

Learn how to make fabulous organic abstract shapes to use in your jewelry fabrication. The shapes and possibilities are endless and only limited by your imagination.

The class includes melting metal scrap and casting grain, how to season your crucible, and preparing the materials to pour over, eg pine straw, rock salt, lentils, water. We will working primarily in bronze. Those of you who want to work in silver may provide your own, either scrap or grain.

To participate in this class you'll need instructor approval. This is not to exclude but to be certain that your skills are up to the challenge so we can all be safe. You must be VERY comfortable with the acetylene torch and holding it in your non-dominant hand. Keep in mind that we'll be swirling molten metal around in a crucible, so safety is paramount. Closed toe shoes are non-negotiable.



Student numbers will be small, five per session, due to the nature of the class. We only have one torch and the process is somewhat time consuming. The Club has one handle and crucible that can be shared and three sets for sale. You are encouraged to bring your own equipment if you have it but some may be disallowed at the instructors discretion. If both sections fill and there's still an interest I will offer the class again later this year.



Kit fee includes; zinc-free bronze casting grain, gas, materials to pour over, borax, printed instructions and all consumables.

Please reach out to me if you have any questions. curranshelley1@gmail.com

Certification/Safety Classes: The Certification/Safety Class scheduled for Monday, February 20, 2023 is full with a wait list. The next class will be in April (final date is TBD). To get on the list for the April class please send your name and contact information - name, email address, and cell phone number (for text messages) to Certifications@wilddivystudio.com We will have 9 seats available for this class.

Seats will be filled in the order I receive them. If your request is too late to get a seat in the class, you will be notified that you are on the wait list. If there are no cancellations from the first 9 seats we will try to schedule a small overflow class. If that isn't possible those on the wait list will be moved to the next class.

CERTIFICATION CLASS INFORMATION – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY:

Email with detailed information about the class will be sent to everyone who has a place in the class. This will be sent at least 2 weeks before the scheduled date. **You must reply to that email to be scheduled for the class or to request a future class.** One reminder email will be sent to those who do not respond to the first email. If there is no reply after the 2nd email, **your name will be removed from Certification Requests list.** If you are still interested in Certification, you will have to send in your information again to get on the current list



Pebble Pups - Thursday January 26, 6:30

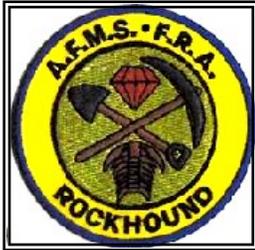
We are still part of the Future Rockhounds of America, and will still be working on the merit badges that they offer. We just changed our name.

The Pebble Pups have a great new year for 2023 and we have a really cool program to start the year! On January 26th, we will meet at the Ed Center at 6:30 PM. For contact information, email hsvgems@gmail.com

Join us this month for an exciting program on Coprolite. So what is coprolite?

A **coprolite** (also known as a coprolith) is fossilized poop. Coprolites are classified as trace fossils as opposed to body fossils, as they give evidence for the animal's behavior (in this case, diet) rather than body shape.

Gastroliths are stones that were used by dinosaurs for helping grind their food. Come learn about these fascinating fossils and even take one home to add to your own rock collection. Lets study all about dino poop and gastroliths.



Bring your favorite rock to our Show-and-Tell at the beginning of the meeting.



Hey Pebble Pups! Do you know what really pretty purple gemstone is loved by almost everyone? Do you know that it is part of the quartz family? Did you know that you can find it in multiple locations on multiple continents around the world? Do you know in what formations it most often occurs?

So the answers to all of these questions will be discussed and the gemstone will be examined and you will take a sample home if you attend the Pebble Pups, February meeting, on February 23rd, at 6:30 PM at the Ed Center.



Lapidary Lab Potential Policy Changes

At the Senior Center when the Lab became available in the evenings and we opened to members on three consecutive nights, the small room stayed crowded. Then we moved to our new home on Bailey Cove Rd, and the new place stayed crowded. It is currently available for use with a host on hand during the day on Tuesdays and Saturdays and on all evenings from Monday through Friday. And it is no longer crowded.

It may be time to reevaluate how often the place remains available. Tuesday daytimes and evenings are often having from none but the host up to four users. Thursday evenings are also often have only the host. Friday evenings have three regulars.

A solution which would make it fairer for the hosts on those evenings would be to make it mandatory for those who want to use the lab to send in a request for access. Another option is to eliminate some evening access times. On Mondays and Wednesdays the crowd is typically pretty good. This is not something that will be immediately implemented, but if the trend continues, you might expect it the subject to come up again.

Our Annual Fundraiser Auction is coming up fast, only six weeks. Saturday March 25, 2023

Doors open at 9:30 for registration and viewing. Bidding starts at 10:00 AM



The funds raised by the annual auction comprise about one third of the Clubs yearly budget. The money raised goes toward funding all areas of the Club. Last year we raised about \$5,000.00.

In order to make the auction happen we need two things, donations and volunteers. There are various volunteer opportunities available. We need people for registration and paddles, bid spotters, runners, trackers, checkout, sold table, buy it now table, etc. Some jobs involve a lot of standing and walking, others are mostly sit down. Something for Everyone. All in all a minimum of twenty people. We also need set up crews for the Friday evening before the event too.

Your donations are tax deductible and may be brought to the Ed Center during any Club activity and left with an instructor. If this is not convenient for you I will come pick it up. We appreciate sooner rather than later so we can get everything photographed and catalogued. Thank you in advance for all your donations and hard work.

Mineral of the Month – Chalcedony (var. Fire Agate) By Leslie A. Malakowsky



This month's mineral was inspired by the record low temperatures we've been having in North Alabama. For example, the temperature on December 23rd, 2022, plummeted to 3 °F! That's extreme for us! But perhaps, with a little imagination, we can warm up by gazing at a beautiful piece of polished fire agate!

Fire agate is a variety of botryoidal chalcedony (a mineral habit in which the mineral's external form is composed of rounded segments), a cryptocrystalline form of silica, SiO₂ (silicon dioxide). Fire agate consists of layers of microscopic silica and iron oxide particles that cause the *Schiller effect* (as in mother-of-pearl). The alternating layers of silica and iron oxide diffract incoming light forming an interference of colors causing the vibrant fire effect for which the stone is named. The iridescent colors include red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. It's similar to opal in this respect because of the multitude of colors and their hues and tints, but that's where the similarity ends. Opal is a hydrated amorphous form (lacking the internal structure of a crystal) of silica so it's classified as a *mineraloid*, not a mineral. Opal is also a little softer having a Mohs hardness of 5.5 – 6 as opposed to fire agate's 6.5 – 7.

This mineral is found in certain areas of central and northern Mexico, and New Mexico, Arizona, and California in the United States. But the most sought-after stones tend to come from Mexico. In the Tertiary Period, about 24 – 36 million years ago, these areas underwent massive volcanic activity. Hot water, saturated with silica and iron oxide, flowed to the surface, filled cracks and bubbles in the surrounding rock, and over time, formed fire agate.

Fire agate is a semi-precious gemstone, and fine quality stones are prized by collectors and artisans for shelf specimens, jewelry making (beads, cabochons, and faceted stones), and carving into decorative objects. But like many gemstones, it's not very attractive in its rough form. While most other rough gemstones provide some clue on the outside as to what's on the inside, that's not always true of fire agate. Even when you're sure there's color inside, this stone can fool you and turn out to be an "ugly duckling" on the inside. So it's a bit of a gamble for the lapidary who decides to work with this stone. Consequently, fine quality fire agate is rare, and unfortunately, there are no industrial applications for poor quality stones as there are for diamonds, for example. But, for the lucky lapidary who finds iridescence on the inside, it's worth the effort!



January Birthdays

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Robert Handford | 11 Monica Joyce |
| 3 John Strandquist | 20 Betty Zoller |
| 3 Steve Tesh | 21 Lowell Zoller |
| 4 Wayne Hall | 22 Abigail Cantrell |
| 6 Linda Meek | 22 Mike Wesley |
| 7 Anita Bynum | 23 Isabel Leon y Leon |
| 8 Susan Lowman | 23 Rob Sanderson |
| 9 Brian Burgess | 29 Deone Keane |
| 10 Brittany Stoner | 30 Sherry Cantrell |

Anniversaries

None reported this month



January Garnet

February Birthdays

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Ryan Flipppo | 12 Kay Jones |
| 2 Michael Cape | 12 Deborah Wright |
| 2 Maureen Lokken | 13 Roxanne Dusold |
| 4 Frank Hollifield | 13 Justin Glanton |
| 5 Alli Curran | 17 Don Cooper |
| 5 Catherine Toriello | 18 Wayne Falkenberg |
| 6 Mike Goode | 18 Amy Freeman |
| 6 Linda Howard | 19 Karen Milly |
| 7 Lester Bartel | 21 Zachery Moore |
| 7 Karen Cale | 23 Alison Wydner |
| 10 Tony Smith | 22 Joey Bonds |
| 11 Ginger McElhaney | 26 Henry Markus |
| | 26 Paulette Minor |

Anniversaries

- 10 Norman & Jeanette McGahee
 12 Don & Marie Aldridge
 12 Kay & Mark Jones
 12 Brant & Alice Kosten
 21 Daniel & Veronica Dunn



February Amethyst

The Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education , 7901 Bailey Cove Rd. SE, Huntsville AL 35802

Metal Smithing Instructors: Shelley Curran, Kathy Bowman, Jan Edmunds

Lapidary: Bill Friday, James Yack, Bruce Kowalczyk, Anthony Zwilling, Les Bartel

Rocket City Jewelers: Judy Osmundson, Theresa Chivers, Leslie Malakowsky

Pebble Pups: Dee Dee Morton, Mike Harrison, Bill Friday

Monday	Metal Smithing Lapidary Lapidary	5:30pm - 9:00pm 1st Monday each month 9:45am-2:00pm 6:00pm - 9:00pm
Tuesday	Lapidary HGMS Meetings	9:00am - 2:00pm, 6:00pm - 9:00pm 6:00pm - 8:30pm 4th Tuesdays
Wednesday	Lapidary Rocket City Jewelers 1st & 3rd Weeks - Rocket City Jewelers 2nd, 4th, 5th Weeks -	6:00pm - 9:00pm 6:00pm - 9:00pm 2:00pm - 5:00pm
Thursday	Lapidary Metal Smithing Pebble Pups	6:00pm - 9:00pm 5:00pm - 9:00pm 6:30pm 4th Thursdays
Friday	Lapidary	6:00pm - 9:00pm
Saturday	Metal Smithing Lapidary	9:00am - 3:00pm irregular 1st Saturday of the Month 9:00am - 12:00 noon
Sunday	Lapidary	12:00 to 3:00



2023 CALENDAR

- 24 Jan '23 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 28 Feb '23 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 28 Mar '23 Saturday - Annual Rock Auction—Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 9:30am
- 25 Apr '23 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 23 May '23 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 27 Jun '23 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 25 Jul '23 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 22 Aug '23 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 26 Sep '23 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 6-8 Oct '23 - HGMS Fall Gem, Jewelry, and Mineral Show
Jaycee Building, 2180 Airport Rd, Huntsville AL



Deadline for Next Newsletter
February 18, 2023

**Dated material
Do not delay**

January 2023

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 Huntsville, AL 35803