

ROCKET CITY ROCKS & GEMS



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

Volume 55 No. 8

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

August 2023

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HGMS August Meeting, 6:00 gather, 6:30 business

**Anthony Zwilling will describe his trip to gather
Cooper Pedy Opals in Australia.**



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



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25 July, 2023 HGMS General Meeting.—James Yack, Recording Secretary

Welcome all new members! Mike Roberts, Suzy McGaha, Cecelia Lellow, Thomas Piff (past president of HGMS appx 1990), Todd Gray, Riley Laurendine.

Jim Lacefield's book is for sale. Free rocks for new members.

June meeting minutes were accepted.

October we will be voting for new board members. We will need new nominations for 2024.

Lapidary news, ring saw broken blade

Membership: Dues will be payable during the Fall Show, and delinquent after Dec 31st

RCJ: Please check your newsletters for class info. Always, RSVP for classes that interest you.

Metalsmithing: Please check your newsletter for class info. You must be certified with a torch to participate in classes.

Water is turned off in the building and may affect all business in our building.

Pebble pups: 4th Thursday of the month we will be exploring fossils.

The City workers are still waiting on a part for the electrical system. We will have a power outage for appx 1 week when that is installed.

The Dixie Mineral Council trip will be to Dillwyn VA to collect kyanite

The Show is 11 weeks away.

Program on Quartz by Bill Friday.

Tours of our facility will be available after the program.

Meeting adjourned. 7:55.

Area Shows **6-9 August: Franklin, NC**

Gem & Lapidary Wholesale Trade Show <https://glwshows.com/>

Show Hours: Thursday 10am-6pm, Friday 10am-6pm, Saturday 10am - 6pm, Sunday 9am-3pm

6295 Sylva Road Franklin, NC.

Sept 1-3, 2023 IRONDALE, AL: Alabama Mineral & Lapidary Society; NEW VENUE! Irondale Civic Ctr (former Zamora Shrine Temple), 3521 Ratliff Rd., Irondale, AL 35210; Friday & Saturday, 10am-6pm, Sunday 10am-4pm.

Adults: \$5; Teens: \$3; 12 & under: FREE. More info: amlsgemshow@gmail.com; <https://www.facebook.com/events/1307348173327314/>

10/20-22/2023—KNOXVILLE, TN: The Knoxville Gem & Mineral Society; Rothchild Conference Center, 8807 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, TN 37923, Fri & Sat 10-6, Sun 11-5; The Gem Show is open to the public. Admission fee \$8/day for adults or \$15/whole show; children under 12 are admitted free. Website <http://www.knoxrocks.org/gem-show/>

4-7 September: Hendersonville, NC, Henderson County Gem & Mineral Society "Gems and Minerals of Brazil"

Show Hours: Friday 10am-7pm, Saturday 10am - 7pm, Sunday 12am-5pm Whitmore Center, 310 Lily Pond Drive, Hendersonville, NC. Exhibits, demonstrations, vendors, hourly door prizes, and refreshments Admission: \$4 adults, free for children under 12 accompanied by a paid adult

11-13 September: Winston-Salem, NC, Forsyth Gem & Mineral Club "Gems and Minerals of Brazil" Show Hours: Friday 10am-7pm, Saturday 10am - 7pm, Sunday 12am-5pm Winston-Salem Fairgrounds-Educational Bldg, Gate 9 – off 27th Street. 28 dealers, educational exhibits, demonstrations, and special presentations on the minerals of Brazil. Admission: \$3 adults, free for children

Short History of the Coober Pedy Opal Mine in Australia

In January 1915 – 100 years ago – a small group of men named the New Colorado Prospecting Syndicate had unsuccessfully been searching for gold just south of Coober Pedy.

On February 1, they had set up camp and were searching for water when the 15 year-old (William Hutchison) son of one of the men found pieces of surface opal. Eight days later, the first opal claim was pegged.

Due to lack of water and the extreme heat, the party left on February 18th and headed to William Creek. A few months later, the O'Neill brothers & Fred Blakeley arrived and became the earliest opal mining pioneers and introduced the unique method of living underground in "dugouts". The flies were bad and there were no building materials.

In 1917, the Trans Continental Railway was completed and a number of construction workers came to the opal fields. They were followed by soldiers returning from the First World War. Conditions were harsh and water and provisions had to be carted great distances and under very trying conditions.

Australia has 95% of the world's supply of commercial opal and the largest percentage still comes from the 70 opal fields around Coober Pedy. Opal is a true precious stone composed of amorphous silica and water. 85% of all opal found is called potch (opal without fiery colours) which has little value. It is the other 10% of vividly colored opal that qualifies as the precious opal admired

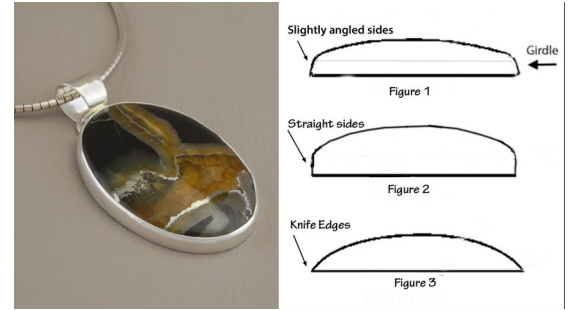


Metal Smithing/Silver Group by Kathy Bowman & Shelley Curran

Bezel Setting a Cabochon

Session 1: Thursday, September 7

Session 2: Monday, September 11



We have had several certification classes since our last *Beginning Cabochon Setting* Class and have lots of new people taking classes. If you are just starting metalsmithing this is a basic skill you need to learn. Many of our project classes include setting cabochons and we have noticed that even students who have been with us a while might need a refresher. If you are new to metalsmithing you should start with an oval cabochon (no corners or points). The cab should have slightly angled sides and nice even "girdle" like *Figure 1*. Cabs cut like *Figures 2 or 3* are difficult for beginners to set. You should bring the stone you want to set to class. We will provide all other supplies and tools. Our more experienced students may want to challenge themselves by setting a stone with corners or two small (10x8 or 12x10) cabs for earrings. The class also has a good supply of small oval cabs for earrings (\$3 each), and we will have some larger cabs available for sale if you do not have one.

The signup sheet will be available on Monday and Thursday night classes and at the monthly HGMS meeting. You can also sign up for this class by sending email to HGMS@wildivystudio.com. There are 9 places in each session for a total of 18 places.

Certification/Safety Classes: The next Certification/Safety Class has been scheduled for **Monday September 25**. Please send your name and contact information (name, email address, and cell phone number (for text messages) to Certifications@wildivystudio.com to get on the list for the class. Seats will be filled in the order I receive them. If you end up on the wait list, you will be added to the next scheduled class.. Certification classes are scheduled approximately every other month.

CERTIFICATION CLASS INFORMATION – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY:

After Certification Class dates are set, email notices with information about the class(es) will be sent to everyone who is currently on the request list about a week 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.

Facebook Users: The Metalsmithing class has our own page in Facebook groups. You can see info on classes, examples of project classes and other general information. Members of the group can post their finished class projects. Our class page is HGMS Metalsmithing Group. The link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/438777169648170>

Volunteer Positions *

Class Instructors:	Kathy Bowman Shelley Curran
Tools/Equipment Inventory	Annie Diekmann
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.**

The sign-up sheet for the class will be available at the HGMS meeting and during Monday or Thursday work sessions. You may also register by sending email to HGMS@wildivystudio.com.

If you sign up for the class and cannot attend, please be considerate and notify the instructors as soon as possible so that if someone is on the wait list, they can attend in your place.



Rocket City Jewelers (RCJ) News

By Leslie Malakowsky

August 2023

Hello jewelry makers! RCJ is open to all HGMS members 16 and older. All skill levels are welcome! We're still having classes in the Education Center, which currently has water and power until further notice. The much-anticipated **Chainmaille Pinecone Earrings class is this Wednesday, August 16th, from 6p – 9p!** Also, if you're planning to make the Inlayed Chainmaille Loom Bracelet on September 6th, don't forget to design your pattern and order your jump rings. See Judy's emails for details.

Note: The next HGMS display in the main branch of the Huntsville Public Library is coming up in September. All RCJ members are invited to donate jewelry to the display. Please start bringing your jewelry to the meetings. Make a list of your pieces and enclose them in a self-seal bag. Participation is voluntary.



3rd Quarter Classes:

Unless otherwise indicated, all kits are \$5.

Aug 16: Pinecone Chainmaille Earrings. Make pinecones in the Dragonscale weave using Enameled Copper (EC) rings, and attach wrapped loops and earring findings. Bring 2 pairs of flat nose pliers, chain nose pliers, round nose pliers, and cutters.

Sep 6: Inlayed Chainmaille Loom Bracelet. Make a bracelet in the Euro 4-in-1 weave using a loom. **Design your own pattern and order your own jump rings ahead of time.** Bring 2 pairs of flat nose pliers. You can borrow a loom to use in class or purchase a loom from Judy.

Sep 20: Love Knot Chainmaille Bracelet. Make a bracelet in the Love Knot weave using copper jump rings. **Order your own jump rings ahead of time.** Bring 2 pairs of flat nose pliers. You can add a personalized heart charm to your bracelet. Stamps, hammers, and bench blocks provided.

Meeting Times/Reservations:

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

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

The front doors will be unlocked for the first hour. After that, you'll need to call Judy or Theresa to let you in.

Class 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 days. Signup sheets are available at RCJ meetings, or you may contact Theresa Chivers **a month before class** at: rocketcityjewelers@gmail.com. Include your name, contact info, and class(es) you want. **NOTE:** When you sign up for a class, you are responsible for the cost of that class and for attending. We send out texts and/or emails often. A reply confirming your attendance is necessary.



Pebble Pups - Thursday April 27, 6:30

Calling all Pebble Pups!

Come to the Sandra Moon Education Complex on August 24th for the Pebble Pups meeting at 6:30. In case you are a first timer, it is located at 7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville in the old Grissom High School Field House.

Mike, Dee Dee, Angela and Bill

Join the pebble pups this month as we learn about Fluorescence rocks. We'll learn about short and long wave uv lights and Safety precautions needed to use them. What makes them "glow", are they rare, are they from outer space, get the answers to these questions and many more. Each pup will leave the program with their own uv light and samples of Fluorescence rocks to start their own collection.



Fluorescent Minerals

We will also discuss the photo contest for the Southeast Federation of Mineral Societies website! Each Pup can submit one photo each by August 31st, include a description of the items used in the photo, items used can include rocks, minerals, gems, jewelry, fossils and lapidary equipment, the image will show the numerical year of 2024, be of a resolution of at least 1200 pixels across (horizontally) the image. The HGMS board will select the two best photos to submit to the SFMS contest. Please email your photo to campcraft.mike@gmail.com by August 31st.

Below is the photo used for this year on the officer's page of the SFMS website to give you an idea of the variety of materials that may be used.



Our Fall Gem Jewelry & Mineral Show is now only 2 months away.

We will be recruiting Activity Leaders at the August Meeting, and these will begin recruiting helpers for all Show scheduled times.

Please consider signing up for one of these opportunities and let Bill Friday know your plans.

Reminder — Membership Dues will become **due** starting at the Show, and the cutoff will be Dec 31. This change is put in place to make it easier and less costly for us to maintain our association with the Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, which among other benefits is how we get to attend Dixie Mineral Council Field Trips and our Insurance Coverage. Those fees are based on membership as of Dec 31.

Thanks Theresa Chivers rocketcityjewelers@gmail.com

October 13- 15, 2023

The Huntsville Gem & Mineral Society's

Annual Gem, Jewelry & Mineral Show

October 13-14 - 10am to 6pm

October 15 - 10am to 5pm

featuring

Extravaganza Kids' Area!

Crystal Building, Mineral Classification, Fossil Dig, Scavenge Hunt

Mining Flume (panning for gems), Fluorescent Room Fossil Dig

Plus 18 Vendors with a wide array of Gemstones

Fine Gold & Silver Jewelry, Beads, Lapidary Supplies

Demonstrations, Hourly Door Prizes, Raffle



Free Parking

*Jaycee Community Building
2180 Airport Road SW
Huntsville, AL 35802*

Admission

\$3 Donation at door
\$1 Donation Students
Children under 3 free
\$5 Weekend Pass (3 days)

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.

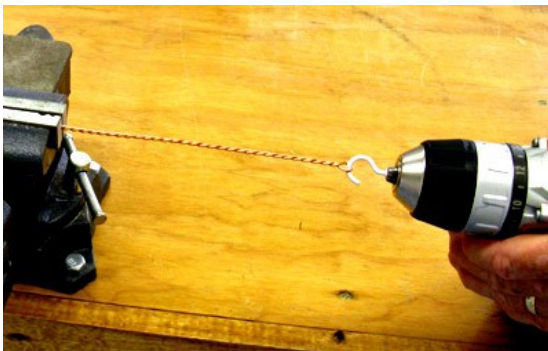


FINISHING PIERCED PATTERNS

After sawing patterns there's always a little cleanup to do, and the smaller cut-outs can be a challenge. Needle files (7-8 inches) can get into the larger areas, and escapement files (4 inches) can get into some of the corners.

But I often find myself wanting even smaller files. I couldn't find them even at a watchmaker tools supply company, so I had to try something else. I ended up grinding down the tip of a 4" barrette file using a separating disk (or cutoff wheel) in the Dremel or Foredom.

Be sure to wear your safety glasses when using this tool. A flake of steel in your eye makes for a bad day.



MAKING FILIGREE WIRE

Making wire for filigree is quite simple. Take a double strand of 24-26 gauge silver wire, twist it tightly, and then flatten it a bit. While the basics are straightforward, here's a few tips that will quickly make you an expert with filigree.



Filigree looks best when the wire has a very tight twist. The way I do this is to

start with dead soft wire and twist it until it breaks. It always seems to break on one end or the other.

I like to use a screw gun, although a Foredom also works well. You'll need a small hook in the spindle, either a cup hook from the hardware store or a nail that has been bent into the shape.

Be sure to keep a little tension on the wires as you twist. Then to get a real tight twist, I anneal the wire to relieve the work-hardening and twist it a second time until it breaks.

The final step in prepping the filigree wire is to flatten it slightly with a planishing hammer or rolling mill. The amount of flattening is a personal preference. I like to reduce the diameter about 25%. The wire will be quite stiff at this point, so it's best to anneal it again before starting to make the filigree shapes.

Mineral of the Month – Cinnabar By Leslie A. Malakowsky



Chinese carved cinnabar lacquerware, late Qing dynasty.



Fiery Red Dragon Cinnabar Necklace



Although we live in the digital age, the mercury thermometer is still regarded as one of the most accurate thermometers available. Mercury is a chemical element with the symbol Hg on the periodic table. It's the only metallic element that's liquid at standard temperatures and pressures, making it ideal for use in a thermometer. We read the temperature by correlating the top of the mercury "column" to the temperature scale. In these "dog days" of summer, we can certainly see the mercury rising in our thermometers, but just where does this mysterious liquid come from?

Mercury occurs throughout the world mostly in deposits of cinnabar, a toxic mercury-sulfide mineral with the formula HgS. This mineral is the most common source ore of elemental mercury. Cinnabar is associated with volcanic activity and alkaline (water-based solutions having a pH higher than 7) hot springs. As geothermal solutions move upwards towards the Earth's surface, temperatures and pressures decrease allowing cinnabar to deposit in veins or cracks in the native rocks. Minerals that are often found with cinnabar include stibnite, realgar, pyrite, and marcasite.

Cinnabar can occur as thick tabular or slender prismatic crystals or as granular to massive incrustations. Crystals can resemble quartz in symmetry and can sometimes exhibit simple twinning. Colors include pale red, violet red, bright red, brownish red, lead gray and nearly black. (The name cinnabar comes from the Greek word *kinnabari*. In Latin, it was sometimes known as *minium*, meaning "red cinnamon".) Another distinguishing feature is the mineral's low hardness, 2.0 – 2.5, which means that it's about as soft as gypsum.

Cinnabar has been mined for thousands of years, as far back as the Neolithic Age. Because of its bright red color and softness, it's been used as pigment (called vermilion) and ornamental stone by people all over the world. (Vermillion is made by grinding cinnabar or synthetic mercury sulfide.) There are many examples: the illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages, the paintings of the Renaissance, the *sindoor* (urban settlements) of India, the rouge-type cosmetics of the Near East, the royal burial chambers of the New World, and the stoneware of China. Chinese lacquerware was invented because it was believed that mixing lacquer with the pigment would reduce the pigment's toxicity. (In the modern jewelry industry, the toxic pigment is replaced by a resin-based polymer that approximates the appearance of pigmented lacquer.)

Cinnabar was widely used in the art and decoration of ancient Rome, where it was mined both as a pigment and for its mercury content. The Romans were the first to recognize mercury's toxicity. (Modern precautions for the use and handling of cinnabar were developed specifically because of that.) But in the ancient world, overexposure to mercury was viewed as an occupational disease. Consequently, slaves or convicts were relegated to the mines.



Cinnabar mercury ore from Nevada

Cinnabar is found in all mineral localities that yield mercury. In the United States, cinnabar is mined in Alaska, Arkansas, California, and Texas. If you're in the market for carved cinnabar, know what you're buying. Today, pieces are often molded out of plastic or resin to simulate carved cinnabar.

To produce liquid mercury, cinnabar is crushed and heated in a rotary furnace. Pure mercury separates from the sulfur and evaporates as the furnace rotates. The liquid is collected in a condensing column. Mercury is also used in barometers, fluorescent lights, and other devices.

References: wikipedia.org, mindat.org

August Birthdays

- 2 Lawrence Nelms 24 Brian Allen
- 4 Brooks Glover 28 Evan O'Dell
- 14 Emma Snodgrass 28 Jerry Osmundson
- 18 Will Bryan 29 John Wright
- 19 Jimi Sitko 31 Woody Chamberlain
- 23 Gordon Jones

Anniversaries

- 1 Clara & Mike Goode
- 3 Brian & Karen Allen
- 4 Florence Mims
- 9 Lowell & Betty Zoller
- 28 Anita Bynum
- 31 Becky Rollston



August Peridot

September Birthdays

- 3 Lola Flippo 14 Sheila Tesh
- 3 Gerdy Wyatt 16 Charlie Willhoite
- 6 Ivey Cook 18 Lea Chamberlain
- 7 Mike Harrison 19 Mitzi Cartee
- 10 Marie Aldridge 23 Laurie Porter
- 11 Rick Williams 25 Areep Mohammed
- 12 Rodney Lane 28 Nina Edgeworth
- 13 Mark Falkenberg

Anniversaries

- 1 Frank & Shelley Curran
- 9 Hilde & Rick Williams
- 26 Bill & Rita Friday
- 29 Mike & Theresa Chivers
- Bruce & Allison Kowalczyk



September Sapphire

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

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

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

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

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

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



2023 HUNTSVILLE GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY EXECUTIVE BOARD

President– Anthony Zwillling - afzwillling@gmail.com

Vice President - Bill Friday - bill.Friday@earthlink.net

Recording Secretary: James Yack - jamesgyack@gmail.com

Treasurer: Clara Goode, 256-883-9194 - claragoode1@comcast.net

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Gene Powers - genepowersgddm@gmail.com

Les Bartel - lester.bartel@gmail.com

Shelley Curran - curranshelley1@gmail.com

Theresa Chivers - rocketcityjewelers@gmail.com

2023 COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Property: Michael Cape

macape@knology.net

Program Chair—Bill Friday

bill.friday@earthlink.net

Webpage: Leslie Malakowsky,

lmalakowsky@gmail.com

Auction Chair: Shelley Curran

curranshelley1@gmail.com

Membership: Theresa Chivers

rocketcityjewelers@gmail.com

Field Trips: Bill Friday

bill.friday@earthlink.net

Hospitality: Mike Harrison

campcraft.mike@gmail.com

Pebble Pups: Dee Dee Morton

deemorton@hotmail.com

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Show Vendor Chair: Lowell Zoller, 256-534-8803

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Show Publicity Chair - Tony Smith

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Show Treasurer: Clara Goode, 256-883-9194

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Mineral ID: Lowell Zoller

Lzol@comcast.net

Facility Administrator: Bill Friday

bill.friday@earthlink.net

Publicity: Open

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 and enjoyment of the members and the general public in these areas. This purpose is accomplished through programs and activities, shows, lectures to school children and organizations, and exchange of rocks, minerals, artifacts, and newsletters.

DUES: Annual dues are \$20.00 per person, \$25.00 per family, and are due on January 1st of each year

Membership Applications may be found at our webpage www.Huntsvillegms.org or at the HGMS Education Center during a meeting or at one of our activity periods: 7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 35802

Meetings: 4th 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: DMC: <http://www.amfed.org/sfms/dmc/dmc.htm>

SFMS: <https://www.southeastfed.org/newsletter> - new, under construction

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

2023-24 CALENDAR

- 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
- 13-15 Oct '23 - HGMS Fall Gem, Jewelry, and Mineral Show
Jaycee Building, 2180 Airport Rd, Huntsville AL
- 24 Nov '23 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- Dec '23 - Christmas Dinner -
Date, time, and place to be determined
- 25 Jan '24 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 27 Feb '24 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 23 Mar '24 - HGMS Rock Auction Fund Raiser
Details as available
- 23 Apr '24 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm

Deadline for Next Newsletter
September 17, 2023

Dated material
Do not delay

August 2023

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