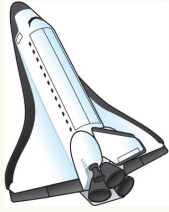


# ROCKET CITY ROCKS & GEMS



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

Volume 56 No. 3

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

March 2024

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## No Membership Meeting This Month



HGMS Rock Sale - Success!!

Web Page - [www.huntsvillegms.org/](http://www.huntsvillegms.org/) email - [hsvgems@gmail.com](mailto:hsvgems@gmail.com)



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### **February 8 2024 HGMS Board meeting - James Yack, Recording Secretary**

The show budget was reviewed and revised. All major changes were voted on and approved. These are reflected in the new budget.

The Board voted and approved a committee to build a new fluorescent display.

The Board voted to put our reserve funds into a CD to collect a better interest rate.

The board voted to have Teresa Chivers added to the debit card and have Brian Burgess removed from the checking acct, leaving Clara Goode, who is the current card holder, still active on the account.

### **General Meeting Minutes February 27, 2024 - James Yack, Recording Secretary**

The meeting started at 6:30pm. Please pick up a Jim Lacefield book, Lost Worlds in Alabama Rocks.

New members and visitors can pick up a new rock.

Financials will be included from the last board meeting.

We will have a yard sale on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, set up on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. We will need volunteers to set up and take down.

Chef Shae will hopefully cater. Hours are 9:30 -2:30. We are taking donations. Please advertise on social medial.

Board approved the show budget. Please see the Board meeting notes.

Blacklight room will still needing an upgrade.

Metalsmithing: Please sign up in advance for classes. Certification classes are required. Please read the newsletter for upcoming events and hours.

RCJ: Please sign up in advance for classes. Please read the newsletter for the upcoming classes and hours.

Lapidary: We added a flat lap, however it is not working properly. The 10-inch saw is now using oil. Please check for lab hours in your newsletter.

Field trips: We are compiling a list of people who may want to do a field trip. Please stay active in the club. We may go to Hogg Mine? Paint Rock? Summerville, GA?

Pebble pups are having fun with appx 3 activities on their meeting nights. The meeting night is the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month.

Three new vendors will be at the show in October. Show updates will happen closer to October.

Dr Richard B. Hoover is speaking on Biospheres in space.

As your humble HGMS President, I want to take a moment to thank all who has helped with the Indoor Yard Sale to make it such a success! I know that for the past few weeks several have helped Shelly identify items for the yard sale. Meeting multiple days in the lapidary room going through the many items that have been given to our club for the annual fundraiser is an arduous task that takes time to sort, identify and price. I don't know all of those who stepped up and pitched in early but thank you.

I also want to thank two other groups, a lot of you are involved in both. First there are 21 identified people who showed up on Friday and Saturday to help set up and finalize the identification and pricing, staff the tables, answer questions, and check people in. They are in no particular order: The second group involved 22 members that showed up on the day of the sale to either help where needed, clean up after the sale or more importantly, just come and shop! There are certainly more who helped in some capacity who got left off of the list, apologies to you - but the sincere thanks go to you as well.

Workers

- Theresa Chivers
- Leslie Malakowsky
- Carla Johnson
- Bob Johnson
- Jan Edmunds
- Matt McCann
- Les Bartel
- Clara Goode
- Linds Sue Reed
- Debbie Epperson
- James Lowery
- Kathy Bowman
- Shelley Curran
- Anthony Zwilling
- Judy Osmundson
- James Mallonee
- Doug Blakeslee
- Liliane Boctor
- Gene Powers
- Nannette Schwartz
- Bill Friday

Helpers & Shoppers

- Michael Cape
- Sheila Cape
- Ray Ferguson
- Dianne Ferguson
- Freida Heim
- Merrill Heim
- Eric Ellison
- Amber Smith
- Mira Barks
- Eric Silkowski
- Ashley Pool
- Daniel Hudson
- Sheryl Shelton
- Bailey Shelton
- Lawrence Hillis
- Mike Roberts
- Sheila Tesh
- Mike Sapp
- Wayne Hall
- Matthew Sager
- Maxwell Sager
- Sophie Sager
- Jeff Powers



I'm overcome with gratitude to all who made it all work so seemingly effortlessly. So again, I say thanks! Your efforts have made it possible to expand and improve the work HGMS does for its members and community.  
Mike Harrison Your HGMS President

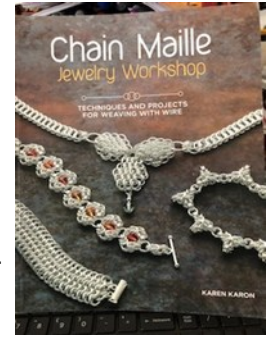






## Rocket City Jewelers (RCJ) News

March 2024



RCJ is open to all HGMS members 16 and older. All skill levels are welcome! No certification is required, but experience using jewelry tools is a plus. We offer one class a month with 4 opportunities to finish the project. **Note:** The last session of the Twisted Metal Earrings class is February 28<sup>th</sup> from 2-5p. The March Ginko Bead Bracelet class is closed. **Attention chainmailers:** If you don't already have the book, Chain Maille Jewelry Workshop by Karen Karon, PLEASE PURCHASE. It's available online or possibly in local bookstores. It's \$24.99 on Amazon and \$15.99 on Kindle!

April

May

June



To sign up for a class, please email Theresa at [rocketcityjewelers@gmail.com](mailto:rocketcityjewelers@gmail.com) a month before class. Include your name, contact info, and the class(es) you want.

### April: Wrapped Crystal Pendant

**Important:** Please sign up soon to allow time for ordering and shipping the crystals.

**Apr 3 and 17:** 6 – 9p, class and make up.

**Apr 10 and 24:** 2 – 5p, class and make up.

### May: Necklace with Two-Tone Triple-Point Byzantine Focal

This necklace is easily customizable!! We'll discuss options in class for ring sizes and color patterns. You'll need to purchase your own rings. Your ring sizes and quantities will depend on your choices.

**May 1 and 15:** 6 – 9p, class and make up.

**May 8 and 22:** 2 – 5p, class and make up.

**May 29 (5<sup>th</sup> Wed):** 2 – 5p, finish it.

### June: Upside-Down Wrapped Cab

This is a Pinterest-inspired woven cab wrap. The teardrop-shaped Malachite cab is wrapped in copper wire.

**Jun 5 and 19:** 6 – 9p, class and make up.

**Jun 12 and 26:** 2 – 5p, class and make up.



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

**Bezel Setting a Cabochon**

Session 1: Thursday, April 4, 2024

Session 2: Monday, April 8, 2024

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". Cabs with very high domes that have a knife edge, and no girdle are harder 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, two small (10x8 or 12x10) cabs for earrings or add a decorative wire border. 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](mailto: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 tentatively scheduled for **Tuesday, May 21** Please send your name and contact information (name, email address, and cell phone number (for text messages) to [Certifications@wildivystudio.com](mailto: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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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

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.**





**Pebble Pups - Thursday March 28, 6:30 - at the Education Center**

Welcome to March! We have a great program scheduled for the Pups on March 28th at 6:30 in the South Room of the Sandra Moon Ed Center.

Again we will have three activities; Theresa will lead a lapidary arts project, Dee Dee and Eric will talk about the upcoming April 8th Solar Eclipse and Angela will talk about the two March Birthstones and fossil Ammonite.

If you were not yet aware, the March birthstone is Aquamarine! It is a variety of the mineral called beryl. Beryl is a relatively rare silicate mineral with a chemical composition of  $Be_3Al_2Si_6O_{18}$ . It is found in igneous and metamorphic rocks in many parts of the world. It is found in a range of color from greenish-blue to blue and range from a very light, almost imperceptible color to stones with a rich vibrant color. The color is usually more intense in larger stones, and darker blue stones are very valuable. The name aquamarine is derived from a combination of two Latin words: *aqua*, meaning water, and *marina*, meaning the sea - the color of the sea. Aquamarine is harder than simple quartz coming in at 7.5 to 8.0 on the Mohs hardness scale. Also, it is mined mainly in Brazil, but it is also found in Nigeria, Madagascar, Zambia, Pakistan, and Mozambique.

The Traditional birthstone for March is Bloodstone. Bloodstone is a dark green variety of chalcedony adorned with a spatter of bright red. It has been a popular gemstone for at least two thousand years and has served as the modern birthstone for the month of March since 1912.

So attend the March Pups meeting and take home some really cool collectable minerals and fossils!

Your Pup's Leadership Team,

Mike, Angela, Dee, Theresa, Scott, and Bill



Earth in Space



Rocks & Minerals



Lapidary Arts



## Mineral of the Month – Tourmaline *By Leslie A. Malakowsky*



Elbaite



Rubellite

Tourmaline is a crystalline boron-silicate mineral composed of a variety of metallic elements including lithium, iron and magnesium. The formula for tourmaline is  $\text{Na}(\text{Mg,Fe})_3\text{Al}_6(\text{OH})_4(\text{BO}_3)_3(\text{Si}_6\text{O}_{18})$ . Tourmaline is a member of the *cyclosilicate* class of silicate minerals. Other minerals in this class include benitoite and beryl (both prior featured), axinite and cordierite.

The metallic elements may occur singly or in combination in the same crystal causing a wide range of varieties and colors. For example, tourmaline can be colorless (achroite); pink, red, green, or blue (“lithia tourmaline” such as uvite and elbaite – in which lithium and aluminum substitute for iron and magnesium); brown and golden brown (dravite – rich in magnesium); and black (schorl – rich in iron). Based on color, the following varietal names are also used: red (rubellite), blue (indicolite), and teal (paraiba). Perhaps the most popular and well-known tourmaline is the green and red variety called “watermelon tourmaline.”

High quality tourmaline is found in North America (most notably California, Colorado, Connecticut, Maine, New York and South Dakota), South America, Africa, Europe and Asia. Ninety-five percent of all tourmaline found worldwide is schorl. The next most common variety is dravite. The finest gem tourmaline is from mines in San Diego County, California. The Himalaya Mine still produces fine pink and green crystals ranging in size from tiny to 6” long and 1” in diameter. (The minerals commonly associated with Himalaya tourmaline are quartz, microcline feldspar, cleavandite and lavender lepidolite.) But the finest tourmaline specimens in the world came from mines in the famous Pala District. Pala mines produced large pink, red, and blue color-zoned crystals up to 7” long and 4” in diameter.

Today, nearly all commercial gem tourmaline comes from Minas Gerais (and other states) in Brazil. And although good Himalaya specimens can still be found on the market, the very large Pala crystals are now found only in museums and private collections.

The name *tourmaline* originated in Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon). Before 1700, the Dutch East India Company supplied Europe with colorful gemstones from Ceylon sold under the local generic term “toramalli.” Dutch stone cutters eventually realized that some of the stones were not the ones they knew, but a previously unknown mineral. By 1766, the name “tourmalin” was used in Europe to describe these stones. In 1875, a self-taught mineral collector named George Frederick Kuntz sold a green tourmaline to Charles Tiffany (of Tiffany and Co., New York). Before then, jewelers didn’t use any stone in their jewelry that wasn’t diamond, ruby, blue sapphire, or emerald. Eventually Kuntz, as Tiffany’s resident gem expert, was influential in the use of tourmaline and other colored stones in fine jewelry. By the end of the century, tourmaline was considered a valuable American gem.



Watermelon Tourmaline

Tourmaline is a hard stone often reaching 7.5 on the Moh’s scale. That makes it ideal for jewelry making. Until recently, schorl and dravite were largely ignored in the gemstone trade. But today, all varieties of tourmaline, including schorl and dravite, are cut and polished into beads and cabochons. You can find everything from drilled slices and natural crystals, to more costly faceted gemstones.

Before our modern understanding that each mineral group is defined by specific physical properties, tourmaline was generally misidentified as the more well-known gemstone it resembled. For example, green varieties were mistaken for emerald, peridot or grossular garnet, and red and pink were confused with ruby, spinel, garnet, kunzite and morganite. Today, we know how to distinguish tourmaline from the gemstones they resemble. Tourmaline is a medium density stone, much lighter than ruby or garnet. And a well-formed tourmaline crystal has a 3-faced termination point not found in other gemstones. Another distinguishing characteristic is *dichroism*, meaning “two colors.” This is an optical phenomenon in which you can see a distinct color shift when the stone is turned (depending on the angle the stone is to the light).

When shopping for tourmaline, remember that clarity and size are major factors in pricing. If you see, for example, a string of bright-red translucent beads called “tourmaline quartz” and priced for \$20, it’s most likely quartz dyed to resemble tourmaline. Tourmaline is also being radiated to enhance its color, especially in Pakistan. So always purchase from a trusted source.

Tourmaline is one of my favorite minerals because of its variety of colors, its beautiful crystals, and its versatility in jewelry making. I remember a college field trip to one of the working gem mines in San Diego County, California. The minerals were huge - quartz crystals the size of small cars! But the highlight of the trip was collecting specimens of pink tourmaline in a lavender lepidolite matrix – heaven! If you have a favorite mineral that you’d like to see featured in the HGMS newsletter, please contact me.

References: “Tourmaline: the chameleon stone” by Kia Resnick, *Bead & Button* magazine; *Mineralogy for Amateurs* by John Sinkankas, c1964, Van Nostrand Reinhold Company; photos from *mindat.org*



### Brad's Bench Tips

"Bench Tips for Jewelry Making" and "Broom Casting for Creative Jewelry" are available on Amazon [www.BradSmithJewelry.com](http://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.

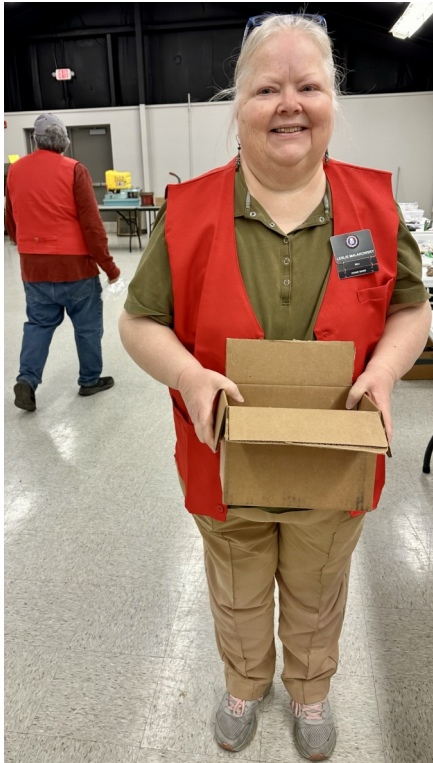


### PRE-MADE BEZEL CUPS

As a general rule of thumb I assume it's going to take me 15 - 20 minutes to make a bezel for an ordinary cabochon, so for some projects buying pre-made cups can save a lot of time. But if you go this route, keep in mind three things. First, try to get cups made from fine silver, not sterling. Fine silver is softer and burnishes over the stone more easily. Second, you may have trouble matching the shape and size of the stone with the shape and size of the bezel cup. Purchased cups can only be found in a limited number of standard sizes. You may have to adjust your choice of gemstone to match the cup. The other consideration is that pre-made cups often have fairly low side walls. While these are fine for low-dome stones, they're not dependable for stones with steep side walls. Lastly before setting, check the fit of your gemstone in the cup, particularly around the bottom. The bottom corners of a stamped cup are much more rounded than a bezel you would fabricate yourself. This causes a problem with stones that have a sharp edge around the bottom. Burnishing the bezel over one of these stones will place a lot of stress on the stone and may cause it to crack. To avoid this, I round off the bottom edge

### March Library Display

Be sure to stop by the main Huntsville Public Library this month to see our display! We have a display in the library twice a year – March and September. The display helps to advertise the club and our two main events – the Annual Auction (this year, the March 23<sup>rd</sup> Rock/Garage sale) and the Fall Show! This month, for the first time, we're excited to include our very active Pebble Pups group! The library is located at 915 Monroe Street downtown. Check the website (<https://hmcp.org/locations>) for operational hours. Our display is on the right after you pass through the sliding glass doors in the entrance.



**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, Theresa Chivers**

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



March  
Aquamarine



April  
Diamond

**2024 HUNTSVILLE GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY EXECUTIVE BOARD**

President– Mike Harrison -  
 Vice President - Shelley Curran -  
 Secretary: James Yack -  
 Treasurer: Clara Goode -  
 Editor: Bill Friday -  
 Past President: Anthony Zwilling -  
 Directors:  
     Gene Powers -  
     Les Bartel -  
     Theresa Chivers -  
     Doug Blakeslee -

**2024 COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

<b>Property: Bill Friday</b>	<b>Show Chair: Tony Smith,</b>
<b>Program Chair—Shelley Curran</b>	<b>Show Vendor Chair: Lowell Zoller</b>
<b>Webpage: Leslie Malakowsky,</b>	<b>Assistant Vendor Chair: Jan Edmunds</b>
<b>Auction Chair: Shelley Curran</b>	<b>Show Publicity Chair - Tony Smith</b>
<b>Membership: Theresa Chivers</b>	<b>Show Treasurer: Clara Goode,</b>
<b>Field Trips: Bill Friday</b>	<b>Mineral ID: Lowell Zoller</b>
<b>Hospitality: Mike Harrison</b>	<b>Facility Administrator: Bill Friday</b>
<b>Pebble Pups: Dee Dee Morton</b>	<b>Publicity: Open</b>

**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](http://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](http://www.amfed.org/news/default.htm)**

# 2024 CALENDAR

- 23 Mar '24 - HGMS Rock Auction Fund Raiser  
Details above in this newsletter - Please Donate items
- 23 Apr '24 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center  
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 28 May '24 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center  
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 22 Jun '24 - Annual HGMS Picnic - Monte Sano State Park  
Monte Sano State Park, Huntsville
- 25 June '24 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center  
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 23 July '24 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center  
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 27 Aug '24 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center  
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 24 Sep '24 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center  
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 11-13 Oct '24 - Annual Fall Gem Jewelry and Mineral Show  
Jaycees Building 2180 Airport Rd, Huntsville AL
- 22 Oct '24 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center  
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 26 Nov '24 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center  
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm

Deadline for Next Newsletter  
April 14, 2024

**Dated material**  
**Do not delay**

March 2024

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