

# ROCKET CITY ROCKS & GEMS



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

Volume 57 No. 2

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

February 2025

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## Meeting Feb 25, 2025 6:00pm

### All Members **Show & Tell**

Bring your favorite three items for display, tell what you have, why they are special, and where you got them.



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



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## HGMS Membership Meeting Minutes - January 28, 2025

Gavel at 6:30 pm.

December Meeting minutes accepted by raised hands count.

### ITEMS-

Help needed for March 21<sup>st</sup> auction, Kathy making some fliers for same. Sign up sheet at door tonight. Bring donations anytime please.

Fall show – Ashley Pool to be manager for Auction event.

Treasurer Report - \$5600 in club bank acct.

RCJ future classes- rock trees, Japanese bracelets, chain bracelets

Metal – Bob Goble will now handle store items.

Feb 6 - 10<sup>th</sup> Hollow form piece, \$6. Cost for base metal.

Louise Fletcher plans to teach another intarsia class, \$20. date TBD based on interest by members.

Please respond to [hsvgems@gmail.com](mailto:hsvgems@gmail.com) if you would like to participate in this two-day event.

Pebble Pups – Feb is geode month. March a jewelry project with Theresa Chivers.

March 29<sup>th</sup> a field trip to Cathedral Caverns - prepaid reservation required.

Field Trips- May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Hogg Mine \$35/day \$50/2 day.

A Machine Dig is in planning - ~\$50/person, date TBD.

The Hogg Mine will go out of operation this summer so these may be your last big chances.

DMC Field Trip - Hiddenite NC. Emerald mine Feb 15<sup>th</sup>. \$20.

Next meeting Feb 25, 2025.

Meeting session adjourned.

Speaker Bill Friday on why things Fluoresce and Phosphoresce.

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## HGMS Board meeting 1/21/2025

Quorum Present: Shelly Curran ,Theresa Chivers, Bill Friday, James Malonee, Debbie Epperson, Ashley Pool.

Mike Harrison by internet link.

General and Fall Show budgets were approved unanimously after discussion and explanations of line items.

These will be presented to the membership for approval at the February 25<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Auction to be held March 22, 2025.

Election of officers will be Sept. 2025, New officers start Nov 1, 2025.

Current Membership: After adjustment for dues-paid membership as of Jan 1, 2025 was 313 adults, 100 kids.

Picnic June 14<sup>th</sup>, Bill to work on if private tables sales will be allowed at same. *[Ed note – approved by the Monte Sano State Park – sales ok only to HGMS members]*

Fall Show – 7 contracts in at old prices so no change to vendor price for 2025. Tickets will be \$5. For adults, under 5 free, ages 6-17 \$1. College students \$2. Steet signs needed to be out sooner this year!

Congrats to Bill Friday on being elected to STUDIO 60 Huntsville Senior Center Board.



## Rocket City Jewelers (RCJ) News

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:** If you signed up to take the **Japanese Bracelet (EC gold)**, make-up dates on Feb 19th - 6 to 9pm and Feb 26th - 2 to 5pm are available.

### 2025 - 1st quarter RCJ Class lineup

 <p><b>Feb - Japanese bracelet (EC gold)</b> Kit = will have Gold toned Enameled Copper rings and clasp.</p>	 <p><b>March - links and beads chain bracelet and/or pendant</b> BYO - 6mm beads or crystals for bracelet and/or pendant. If making a pendant, BYO 4-6mm beads and 1 15 - 20mm coin bead for center. Kit = copper wire and clasp</p>
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Please see the 1st quarter 2025 class lineup below. To sign up for a class, please email Theresa at [rocketcityjewelers@gmail.com](mailto:rocketcityjewelers@gmail.com) at least a month before class. Include your name, contact info, and the class (es) you want. You can also sign up at RCJ meetings and monthly HGMS meetings.

**March: Links and Beads Bracelet or Pendant/Window Hanger.** You will need to bring 4mm or 6mm beads to incorporate in your bracelet or pendant/hanger. If making a bracelet, choose from one of the styles shown. If making a pendant/hanger, you will also need 1, 1/2" to 3/4" (15mm – 20mm) wide coin bead drilled from side to side. You will sew your 4mm or 6mm beads around the edges to complement the coin bead.

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

**Mar 12 & 26: 2 – 5p, class and make up**

STUDIO 60 Huntsville Senior Center **The Magic Show**  
March 22 with two shows – 2 pm & 6pm. Presented by Ring 194, Huntsville Magic Club. Get your tickets at <https://STUDIO60MagicShow.eventbrite.com> or in person at STUDIO 60, 2200 Drake Ave, Huntsville



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

**March Class:** We will not be having a Project Class in March because we will be frantically preparing for the Auction on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. We are a little behind schedule because of illness and some scheduled travel in late February and early March.

Attendance has been down during our Open Studio time lately. Several people have said they haven't been coming because they "don't have anything to work on". We have a big book full of lesson instructions dating back to 2016! You should be able to find a project there that will interest you. We have reorganized our space and have a new bookcase with lots of magazines and some jewelry books with interesting projects. If you missed last month's Hollow Form class—that one is still available.

**April Class:** We have had three Certification Classes since last November 2024 and have another scheduled in March. We will finally be offering Setting a Cabochon class on April 3<sup>rd</sup> and April 7. There will likely be a lot of interest from those who completed the Certification class. There will be 18 places available and a lot of folks who will want the class so register early!

The HGMS Auction is Saturday March 22nd.

Volunteers Needed for Friday Setup and the Auction on Saturday. Sign up at the HGMS meeting or [Auction@wildivystudio.com](mailto:Auction@wildivystudio.com)

**Certification/Safety Classes:** The next Certification/Safety Class is scheduled for **Tuesday, March 18**. 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. We only have space for 9 students per class so it will take several months before a seat is available. Currently there is a wait list for the class.

**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 the 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 Jan Edmunds (Monday AM)
Tools/Equipment Inventory	Bob Goble
Store Manager	Bob Goble
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 February 27, 6:30 at the Education Center

January was a fun month with lots of talk of fluorescent minerals! Special thanks to Anthony Zwilling and Angela Mendoza for setting up the "cave" and bringing in specimens with a variety of responses to UV light. Each child who was able to join our Pebble Pups meeting had a chance to choose a rock and then see how it glowed under shortwave and longwave UV lights. We even got to see some with phosphorescent properties and talk about how they held onto the light! No matter what color each rock glowed, the children who chose them had fun looking at everything that was brought in for the program. Bill Friday was able to take the older group and dive a little deeper into what gives fluorescent minerals their glowing properties and how phosphorescence works.

This month we are going to be talking about geodes and nodules - where to find them, how to tell if there is something exciting below the surface, and how to open them. Every child who joins us this month will have the chance to take home their own geode and nodule!

We are still planning our field trip to Cathedral Caverns on Saturday, March 29th. If you are interested in joining us, please reach out to Suzanne Miller at [HGMSpebblePups@gmail.com](mailto:HGMSpebblePups@gmail.com). We will also have information printed out at the meeting. This field trip will add to our topic for next month and give the group a chance to look at a cave in action.

Please join us for our meeting on **Thursday, February 27th at 6:30pm** at the HGMS Education Center at the Sandra Moon Community Center, located at 7901 Bailey Cove Road SE, Huntsville, AL. We can't wait to see you there!

Suzanne Miller and crew Angela, Kendall, Theresa, Matthew, Dee Dee, Bill, Jeff, and Mike



Field Trips



Rocks & Minerals



## SPRING ROCK AUCTION.

Setup Friday Mar 21, 8:00 to 4:00

Auction Saturday, Mar 22. Doors open at 9:00, Bidding at 10:00

Our annual fundraiser auction is almost upon us!

The monies raised from the auction benefit all Club activities, Lapidary, Pebble Pups, RCJ, Metals, and community outreach for education in schools and groups. We strive to not only be an enjoyable organization but to educate people in the art of lapidary and its associated pursuits. This is not without cost. We depend on the auction as it usually raises about one third of the yearly budget.

Because of the generous donations by members past and present we have some very nice things to offer. I hope you all will support the auction by donating time and or goods and purchasing those special pieces that catch your eye.

Please spread the word, Metals and the Rocks Facebook page has shareable flyers—see below. The catalog will be posted in the next week or so.

We still need volunteers for set up on Friday, hang banners and signage, set up and organize goods and help price Buy it Now.

# Huntsville Gem and Mineral Society

## Annual Auction & Sale

### Saturday, March 22, 2025

### Doors Open at 9 am—Bidding Starts at 10 am

- *Lapidary Equipment*
- *Lapidary Rough*
- *Slabs*
- *Specimens*
- *Cabochons*
- *Fossils*
- *Finished Jewelry*
- *Jewelry Supplies*
- *Decorative Objects*  
*and much more!*

Plus more on the  
**BUY IT NOW**  
tables!



# Movie Night

## Coming in March to the Education Center

At the January Meeting, there was an enthusiastic response to the offer to start hosting Movie nights once a month in the Big Room of the Education Center. **We will be serving popcorn and soft drinks.**

The Southeast Federation has over 300 titles available for loan (we only pay return postage). Most are on DVD's but a few are VHS, for both of which we have access to players. They run from half an hour up to a full hour.

An initial list of titles below includes suggested starters, covering rocks, gems, jewelry, fossils, gold panning, volcanoes, and a few more. Also possible for some future venues may be documentaries from the internet, including astronomy, undersea wonders, geology, and nature features. We can increase our internet access if needed.

Some of the specialized offerings may be more useful to the Metals or the RCJ groups for their specific classes.

Please let us know the three of most interest to you and we will order the three top titles. The March Newsletter will give the title of the chosen video.

**RSVP to [hsvgems@gmail.com](mailto:hsvgems@gmail.com) is requested but not required.**



**49. INTRODUCTION TO FACETING - VHS - 90 Min** A very detailed video of faceting the standard brilliant cut. This is a long

program better shown for a study group or an individual. By Ultra-Tec.

**59. SOAPSTONE CARVING - VHS - 30 Min** American Federation 1988 First Place Individual Award. Shows the tools and steps necessary in carving a loon (water fowl) out of soapstone. By Bruce and Ruth Banick. *[There will be a block of soapstone for viewers to examine]*

**60. OPAL CUTTING MADE EASY - VHS - 34 Min** Instruction and process an opal from the rough state to the finished stone. How to choose the proper stone material, step-by-step cutting, and advanced techniques are covered. By Paul Downing.

**70. SMITHSONIAN: ULTIMATE ROCK – DVD - 60 Min** This gives an interesting tour of the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History. Showing gems and minerals, many never seen by the public. Also includes a short informative section on meteorites.

**71. MOUNT ST. HELENS – DVD - 30 Min** (Created from Slides) Excellent showing of the eruption of Mt. St. Helens taken from vantage points. Donated by Cobb County Gem & Mineral.

**76. THE PROSPECTORS DVD - 1987 - 30 Min** Join the legendary Chuck Connors as he chronicles the cross country travels of Bob Trevillan and Frank Carter meeting the most successful treasure hunters from coast to coast. In this adventure you will learn the fine art of panning, sluicing, and dredging for gold.

**78. BASIC WIRE WRAP- DVD-1985-110min** These tapes cover three standard rings for beginners.

**89. THE BLACK HILLS OF SOUTH DAKOTA, GEOLOGICAL GEM OF THE WEST DVD 18 Min** This is an invaluable resource to both amateur and professional geologists. Using simple and understandable language, it takes the viewer through the maze of time and terminology to show the story of the Black Hills and explain why it is the Geological Gem of the West!

**90. CHAIN MAIL AND MESH – DVD -120 Min** This video explains the history as well as demonstrates the process of making chain mail and mesh.

**99. THE STORY OF AMERICA'S GREAT VOLCANOES – DVD, 60 Min** This video reveals the fascinating story of America's volcanoes, most which are only quiet, not dead. Most people see them as destroyers, but volcanoes are really creators. They do not destroy the land - they transform it.

**227. THOSE FABULOUS THUNDER EGGS Part I (2004 AFMS WINNER)** Power Point converted from Slides By Heart of Wisconsin G. & M. Society "Once you've seen one, you've seen them all..." applies to thunder eggs only in one sense – when you can recognize these nodules as distinct from other types, you'll begin to appreciate the variety found around the globe. Examples from worldwide locations are included with information about how and where they form.

## Mineral of the Month – Valentinite

By Leslie A. Malakowsky



While you're more likely to find a sample of this mineral in a mining museum than in a rockhound's collection, I couldn't pass it up. Valentinite's Day, also called Saint Valentine's Day or the Feast of Saint Valentine, originated as a Western Christian feast day (an annual religious celebration dedicated to a particular saint) honoring an early Christian martyr named Saint Valentine. But who would have thought there's a mineral with this name?

Valentinite is an antimony oxide with formula  $Sb_2O_3$ . Antimony is a chemical element with the symbol Sb on the periodic table. It's a lustrous gray *metaloid*, a chemical element with a mixture of properties between metals and non-metals. Antimony is found in nature mainly in the mineral stibnite. It was used in ancient times in powdered form in medicine and cosmetics, often referred to as the Arabic name *kohl*.

Valentinite can range from colorless to white with occasional shades of yellow and red. It typically forms as radiating clusters of crystals or as fibrous masses. It's a softer mineral like gypsum or calcite with a hardness of 2.5 to 3 on Mohs scale.

This mineral occurs as a weathering product of stibnite and other antimony minerals in hydrothermal veins (resulting from circulation of mineral rich water near a source of heat in the Earth's crust). It's dimorphous (the property of some minerals to exist in two crystal forms) with another antimony oxide called senarmontite.

Valentinite was first discovered in 1845 in the Les Chalanches Mine in the French Alps. This mine used to produce the very best valentinite crystals in the world. The largest crystals found measured up to 3cm (1 3/16") long. They occurred in hydrothermal veins in drusy clusters with galena (lead sulfide). Many excellent specimens of valentinite are now found in Algeria.

Valentinite was named in the mid 19th century in honour of author Basilius Valentinus. He wrote the first book to include a detailed description of antimony and antimony compounds. He also wrote about how to prepare *synthetic* antimony, called "the antimony flower".

Both valentinite and senarmontite are the most important commercial sources of antimony. Global production of antimony was 130,000 tons in 2012. China produces the largest quantity of antimony followed by the United States, Mexico, European countries, Japan, South Africa, and other countries. The main use of antimony in the United States is in combination with halide minerals (minerals containing fluoride, chloride, bromide, and iodide) as a flame retardant in electrical apparatus, textiles, and leather.

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

## Get in on a Machine Dig at the Hogg Mine

Chris Painter offers opportunities for groups to schedule a deep dig at the Hogg Mine, uncovering much richer access to the many minerals to be found in the mine site. The Alabama Mineral & Lapidary Society in Birmingham has offered to join with the HGMS in sponsoring one of these opportunities. The cost is \$2500 total, to be divided by the number of participants of both Clubs - i.e \$45 with 30 spaces allotted to each Club for members who sign up and pay in advance. That fee might go up or down according to the actual final count. This event will expose deep material from the original operation as a commercial Beryl Mine, but will also uncover the other minerals - tourmaline, amethyst, aquamarine, and many other very desirable specimens. If you are interested, contact Bill Friday at [hsvgems@gmail.com](mailto:hsvgems@gmail.com) to reserve a spot, no money due till dates are set - looking at May 2025. First come, first served - maximum 30 diggers from HGMS and 30 from AMLS.

The plan is for a machine dig on Friday, open to the public on Saturday for a regular \$35 fee, and a second dig on Sunday with our two crews on hand for the day (don't get in the way of the machine).

Chris Painter is currently planning to close the Hogg Mine this coming Summer, so this may be your last & best opportunity to enjoy this famous mine.





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, Theresa Chivers, Deb Epperson  
**Rocket City Jewelers:** Judy Osmundson, Theresa Chivers, Leslie Malakowsky  
**Pebble Pups:** Suzanne Miller, Angela Mendoza, Theresa Chivers, Dee Dee Morton, Bill Friday

<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 (Except Aug and Sep)</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>
	<b>Lapidary</b>	<b>9:00 - Noon - First Saturday of the month</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 October 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](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)

**2025 HUNTSVILLE GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY EXECUTIVE BOARD**

President - Shelley Curran -

Vice President - Anthony Zwilling -

Secretary: Debbie Epperson -

Treasurer: Theresa Chivers -

Membership - Theresa Chivers -

Editor: Bill Friday -

Past President: Mike Harrison -

Directors:

James Yack -

Ashlee Pool -

James Mallonee -

Doug Blakeslee -

**2025 COMMITTEE CHAIRS****Property: Bill Friday****Program Chair—Bill Friday****Webpage: Leslie Malakowsky,****Auction Chair: Shelley Curran****Membership: Theresa Chivers****Field Trips: Bill Friday****Pebble Pups: Suzanne Miller****Show Chair: Shelley Curran****Show Publicity Chair: Robbin Hicks****Assistant Show Chair: Jan Edmunds****Show Treasurer: Theresa Chivers****Mineral ID: Lowell Zoller****Facility Administrator: Bill Friday****No More Birthday and Anniversary postings.**February  
Amethyst

With over 500 active members in the HGMS, we find it difficult to continue including birthdays and anniversaries in the monthly newsletter. Apology to those with January, and subsequent, special dates, but we will still include the birthstone each issue.

March  
Aquamarine

## 2025 CALENDAR

- 25 Feb '25 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center  
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 22 Mar '25 Sat - Annual Rock Sale / Auction - details above. No regular March Membership Meeting.
- 22 Apr '25 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center  
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 27 May '25 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center  
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 14 Jun '25 [**Saturday**] - Annual HGMS Picnic, Monte Sano State Park
- 22 Jul '25 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center  
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 26 Aug '25 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center  
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 23 Sep '25 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center  
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 10-12 Oct '25 - Fall Gem, Jewelry, and Mineral Sale - Jaycees Building, Airport Rd
- 28 Oct '25 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center  
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 25 Nov '25 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center  
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 9Dec '25 - Christmas Dinner - details as it gets closer - possibly a great potluck dinner again at the Ed Ctr.

Deadline for Next Newsletter

Mar 16, 2025

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

February 2025

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