

ROCKET CITY ROCKS & GEMS



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

Volume 57 No. 4

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

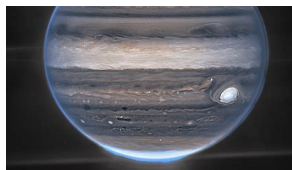
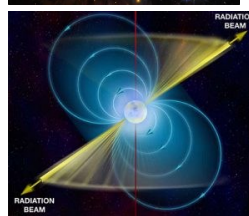
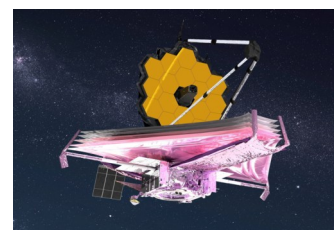
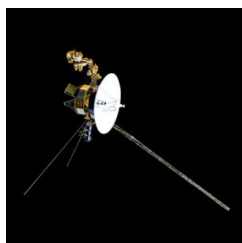
April 2025

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What is Happening in Space?

Telescopes, Satellites, Strange Galaxies, Stranger Stars, Fantastic Launchers, Rovers, and Planet Surprises.



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



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HGMS Board Meeting April 9th, 2025 6 pm

Present: 7 members, forming a quorum.

Review of 2025 Show Vendors paid to date -12. Partial Vendor payees – 5

Lots of discussion of Fall Show billboard companies with handouts. Mashburn offers more boards for less money. Vote was taken to hire Mashburn, 5 for, 1 against. Anthony prefers no billboards. We agreed to use an evaluation sheet at the door of the Fall show as to what brought them. Ashlee started on FB, Instagram, etc. to assess how effective it might be as advertising for the Show.

Picnic on June 14th. Club voted to purchase the meat. All for, no against. The member tailgate sales at the picnic are allowed by the State Park as long as sales are only to HGMS members. Vendors must bring their own tables, chairs, etc.

Cost for Hogg Mine Machine Dig on May 18 was set at \$50 per person. This will be a joint venture with the Birmingham G&M.

T shirt preorders to start soon for club members. (Shelley has a prospective vendor.)

Meeting adjourned 7:05 pm

Debbie Epperson, Secretary



Hello from the Southeast Federation of Mineral Societies 2nd Vice President. Yes, your very own Past-President has become a serving member of the SFMS board of directors!

First, let me remind you that SFMS week is coming up at William Holland the 8th thru the 13th of June with the Summer quarterly meeting at William Holland the morning of the 14th! What a great way to get to see what SFMS is doing to serve you, the individual club members.

As 2nd VP, my responsibility is to care about not only membership in SFMS but also membership in SFMS affiliated clubs! I'm happy to report that all but two clubs are paid in full for a total membership of 7695 total members. Georgia Mineral Society has the most members with a total of over 1,000 members. That includes 200 youth!

I attended the American Federation of Mineral Societies, the national umbrella for the Southeast Federation and the other regional societies, annual meeting on Thursday afternoon. The Eastern Federation of Mineral Societies hosted us in Hickory NC. We had fun and I helped with the Future Rockhound presentation on Saturday Morning. We had a packed house as we showed how teaching Earth Processes can end up with a delicious ice cream sunday to eat when you finish. We also set up sand observing stations and demonstrated how easy it is to collect and study sand from around the world! Everyone had sand sample to take home from all over the United States!

I just wanted you to know there are folks from all over the United States who are also rock, mineral, gemstone, jewelry and fossil enthusiasts.

Mike Harrison, SFMS 2nd VP

There will not be a first Monday lapidary on May 5.



Rocket City Jewelers (RCJ) News April 2025

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're signed up for the April class, 2 more opportunities are available: **Apr 16th, 6 – 9p**, and **Apr 23rd, 2 – 5p**, with a 5th Wednesday on **Apr 30th, 2 – 5p**, to work on this class or any unfinished project. Be sure you read **Judy's March 17th email** about this class. You need to make **2 buttons** – one copper for this class and one silver (aluminum) for the June class. (If you're not taking the June class, you can still make a silver button for a different bracelet or make another LME project. See the photos on the April instruction sheet for ideas.)

To sign up for a class, please email Theresa at rocketcityjewelers@gmail.com at least a *month* before class. Include your name, contact info, the class(es) you want, and *the dates you plan to take them*. You can also sign up at RCJ meetings and monthly HGMS meetings.

2025 - RCJ 2nd Quarter Classes

		
<p>April - LME #6 Metal Buttons and Bead/Jumpring Bracelet. All inclusive kit provided (with options).</p>	<p>Kit provides: 16g AA Maui Blue rings 18g EC Silver rings Dangles - like pictured (charms may vary) Clasp</p> <p>May - Beach Theme Vipers Basket Bracelet</p>	<p>June - Bead and Leather Bracelet Kit plus buttons you made in April.</p>

April: LME (Layered Metal Earrings) #6 - Metal Buttons, Bead & Jumpring Bracelet, and Pendant

Apr 2 & 16: 6 – 9p, class and make up.

Apr 9, 23, & 30 (5th Wed): 2 – 5p, class and make up.

May: Beach Theme Vipers Basket Chainmaille Bracelet

May 7 & 21: 6 – 9p, class and make up.

May 14 & 28: 2 – 5p, class and make up.

June: Bead, Chain, and Leather Bracelet

Jun 4 & 18: 6 – 9p, class and make up.

Jun 11 & 25: 2 – 5p, class and make up.



Metal Smithing/Silver Group by Kathy Bowman & Shelley Curran

May Class: LEAF BROOCH WITH PEARL

Monday, May 5, 2025, 5:00pm –9:00 pm



This brooch is made using a Romero fold, it starts with a T fold and then the legs are forged. The beauty of this simple fold is that no fancy equipment is required. We'll learn to peg set a pearl and fabricate our own pin back mechanism. Kit cost is \$7.00. The kit includes enough copper sheet to make two leaves, wire, pearl, tubing and a stainless steel pin stem. Silver will be available at Market Price.

Kit Cost: \$7.00, The kit includes copper sheet to make two leaves, wire, pearl, tubing, and a stainless steel pin stem, written directions and consumables. Silver will be available at market price.

IN OTHER NEWS Later this spring Shelley is going to be starting an advanced class. We've welcomed so many new people to Metals recently that we've kept our project classes relatively simple this last year or so. I know some of you are ready for more advanced fabrication projects. All the details aren't worked out yet but keep an eye on the Metals Facebook page. We're also trying to figure out how to hold a daytime open studio. More on that later.

Certification/Safety Classes: The date for the next Certification/Safety Class is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, May 20th. (although that might change.) Those on the list will be notified if we do change the date. We are making some changes. Bob Goble will be handing the Safety/Certification classes after the next class.. Those on the Request List will be contacted when a date is set. He is planning on having the class more frequently than every other month so there will not be such a long wait to be certified. Please send your name and contact information (name, email address, and cell phone number (for text messages) **to** get on the list for the class. Seats will be filled in the order we receive them. If you end up on the wait list, you will be added to the next scheduled class. We only have space for 9 students per class. Currently there is a still wait list for the class but hopefully the wait will be shorter.

CERTIFICATION CLASS INFORMATION – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY:

After Certification Class dates are set, email notices with information about the class(es) will be sent to the first 9 people 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 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)
Bob Goble
Bob Goble
Shelley Curran
Kathy Bowman

Tools/Equipment Inventory/ Store Manager
Safety
Kit Manager
Webpage & Social Media Management

***Note: We are all volunteers, so the schedule is subject to change.**



Pebble Pups - Thursday April 24, 6:30 at the Education Center

The Pups were able to take a field trip to Cathedral Caverns on March 29th. We had many of the Pups in attendance and it was a great lead in for our topic this month: Cave Systems!! They got to see a stunning example of a cave system and learn about how the cave is made and how it is used by animals and humans. They had an opportunity to see formations in person and hear about how they were created. They found magical creatures in the rock formations (using their imaginations) and they had a chance to see the darkest darkness at the very end of the cave path. It was a great way to spend a Saturday morning and we had a fantastic turnout!!

We are going to continue our conversation about caves at our April meeting with a very special guest! Our Cathedral Caverns guide, Randall Blackwood from the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, will be joining us for our meeting this month to continue the conversation about cave systems! We are so excited to welcome him to the meeting and to benefit from his wealth of knowledge on this topic. There will be separate conversations for the younger group and the older group so all the Pups can have a chance to talk with him.

Please join us for our meeting in 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



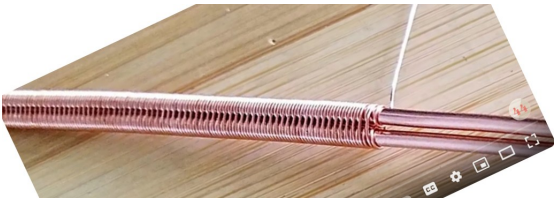
Earth Processes



Movie Night

The Premier of our Movie Nights was lightly attended, but the subject - Opals - was enjoyed by all. We used several YouTube videos made available using our office HotSpot receiver, and an increased data plan. Upcoming feature on April 25 will be Wire Wrapping, again with several short selected videos. This time we will also offer a Matinee at 2:00 and a repeat at 6:30. We will meet in the RCJ room and use the big screen TV.

Popcorn and Soft Drinks available at the food bar for



affordable prices.



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.



TAPERED REAMERS A tool you don't see often these days is a tapered reamer. It's not a tool you'll use everyday, but they're particularly useful for making an irregular hole round or for enlarging a hole to an exact diameter. For example, the small set in the yellow pouch is for holes in the range of 0.3mm to 2.5mm. They are great for sizing a tube to fit a hinge pin. Other times when I'm drilling a hole for riveting and can't find the exact size drill, I simply drill the holes with a slightly smaller bit and enlarge them with a reamer until the wire just fits.

For larger hole sizes in sheet metal up to 14 ga, I really like the reamer with the black handle. It makes quick work of sizing holes from about 3mm to 12mm. You can find them in well-equipped hardware stores.

You may never use the large diameter reamers, but when sawing out some rings from 4mm thick sheet, I found they worked well for rounding and sizing the hole.



TORCH GASSES INSIDE THE HOME It's important to understand the risks in using a torch to make jewelry inside the home. For fuel gasses, my preference is to use only the small disposable Propane tanks. That avoids any possible problems with the fire marshal, with your landlord, or with your insurance company. Note that you can get an adapter to refill these tanks outside from your BBQ propane tank.

For oxygen, I used to use the high pressure tanks, but I don't like the risk of transporting them for refills. My gas supplier wouldn't even load them into the car for me because they didn't want the liability.

A better choice is to get an oxygen concentrator. Search the want-ads for a good bargain. Got mine for \$300. The units put out about 5psi and will run a Smith Little Torch very nicely. No regulator is needed. Look for units with under 5-7000 hours of operation.

PROBLEMS WITH SMALL DRILLS Drilling small holes can be a problem. With drills that are less than 1 mm (18 gauge or .040 inches), some chucks will not tighten down well enough to hold the drill securely.

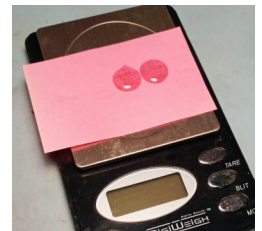
The problem is easily solved in either of two ways - with a chuck adapter or by buying your small drills with a 3/32 inch shank size. Either way you have a large shank to be gripped in your drill press, Foredom or Dremel, so changing bits is fast and easy.



MIXING EPOXY When mixing epoxy, it's very important to have the same amount of each component. If the ratio is not 50:50, the mixture will not develop the best strength or may not harden at all. If the amounts are small, I can generally eye-ball the two components correctly. But I have trouble getting the proper mixture for larger quantities. The easiest way I've found is to use a gram scale.

- > Put a bottle lid or piece of scrap paper on the scale.
- > Zero out the scale.
- > Squeeze out the epoxy Part A.
- > Note the gram weight.
- > Zero out the scale again.
- > Squeeze out the same amount of Part B.
- > Mix thoroughly for use.

It's a trick I had to use when mixing resins for mold making where the ratio is usually 1 to 10



Mineral of the Month – Sylacauga Marble

Malakowsky

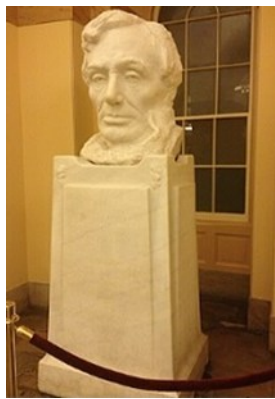
By Leslie A.

Marble is one of Alabama's greatest natural resources boosting both our economy and our cultural heritage. Marble is found in numerous counties mostly in the middle eastern and southeastern parts of the state. Marble isn't a mineral, but I chose to feature it this month to coincide with the "Magic of Marble Festival" in Sylacauga, Alabama. First held in 2009, this annual festival inspires artists from the United States and other countries to try their hand at sculpting this beautiful stone while demonstrating their skills to thousands of visitors.



Sylacauga marble, also known as "Alabama marble", is found in a narrow outcrop running through Talladega County. The approximately 600-foot deep deposit occurs in a 32 mile swath from the Coosa River eastward to south of the city of Talladega and focuses on the town of Sylacauga, nicknamed the "Marble City". This outcrop is known as the "Sylacauga Marble Belt". Fun fact: On September 12, 1969, the Alabama legislature designated marble as the official state rock.

Sylacauga marble is a *non-foliated* metamorphic rock. (Non-foliated metamorphic rocks have a massive or blocky appearance indicating they underwent equal pressure in all directions during metamorphism.) Sylacauga marble originated from limestone that formed about 500 million years ago when the area was covered in a vast, shallow inland sea. Skeletal remains of ancient sea creatures accumulated and compacted forming calcite rich limestone, which later re-crystallized into marble due to heat and pressure in the Earth's crust. Marble that formed from limestone with very few impurities is white. Marble that formed from limestone with impurities such as clay minerals, iron oxides, or bituminous material (naturally occurring forms of petroleum) can have black veins or bluish, gray, pink, or yellow tones.



Because Sylacauga marble is composed of metamorphic calcite, it has a Mohs hardness of 3.0 making it ideal for carving into sculptures and ornamental objects. It's prized for its purity, fine-grained crystalline texture, whiteness, translucency, and beauty. It's frequently compared to Parian marble quarried during the classical era on the Greek island of Paros and to Italian Carrara marble a favorite of Michelangelo. Sylacauga marble has been used extensively for architecture and numerous works of fine art many of which can be seen in the Alabama Department of Archives and History building in Montgomery and in the Birmingham Museum of Art. Another example is Gutzon Borglum's (American sculptor best known for his work on Mount Rushmore) bust of Abraham Lincoln in the United States Capitol rotunda. Fun fact: Considered one of the world's whitest marbles, Sylacauga marble is known worldwide as *white gold*.

Discovered in 1814, Sylacauga marble has been quarried, cut, and polished for over 160 years.

Since 1900, approximately 30 million tons of marble have been mined in Sylacauga. The Sylacauga Marble Quarry is the only producer of dimensional marble for use in sculpting, building, and industry throughout Alabama and the United States.



In architecture, marble is used as a decorative stone (for example, floor tiles, panels, facing stone, window sills, stair treads, and columns). Crushed marble has many applications (for example, landscaping, textiles, electrical insulation, plastics, paints, whitewash, putty, grout, cosmetics, paper, and soft abrasives for cleaning fixtures.) In agriculture, marble is used for acid neutralization in streams, lakes, and soils, and as a calcium additive in animal feeds. It's also an acid neutralizer in a human pharmaceutical known as "Tums", and an inert filler in other pills. In lapidary, some folks cut, grind, and polish marble cabochons for jewelry making.

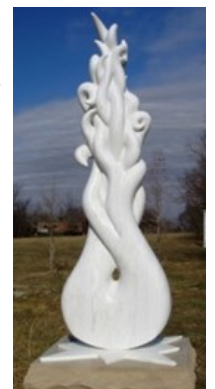
Historical note: On November 30, 1954, a fragment of the "Sylacauga" meteorite struck Ann Hodges in her Oak Grove home near Sylacauga. She survived to become the only documented person to survive being struck by a meteorite.

References: [wikipedia.org](https://www.wikipedia.org), [alabamalegacy.org](https://www.alabamalegacy.org), [alabama.travel](https://www.alabama.travel), [magicofmarblefestival.com](https://www.magicofmarblefestival.com), [ereferencedesk.com/resources/state-symbols/alabama/rock.html](https://www.ereferencedesk.com/resources/state-symbols/alabama/rock.html). See also *Magic in Stone: The Sylacauga*

Marble Story by Ruth Beaumont Cook, University of Georgia Press, ISBN: 9781588384041.



Sculptor at work at the 2024 Magic of Marble Festival



Monument to Ann Hodges

FIELD TRIPS UPCOMING

On Sunday, May 18th, the club will be travelling to the Hogg Mine in Georgia for a machine dig. Chris Painter has clarified that the Hogg Mine will not be closing this summer. He is moving to North Carolina to open a new site, but Hogg Mine will remain open. The cost will be \$50. The limit of 30 HGMS members has been reached, but if you are still interested, put your name on the waiting list by emailing hsvgems@gmail.org. We are sharing this opportunity with the Alabama Mineral & Lapidary Society in Birmingham. The Hogg Mine has beryl, tourmaline, rose quartz, and aquamarine.

We are also looking into a field trip to **Wichahpi Commemorative Stone Wall (Tom's Wall)** near Florence. Tom Hendrix spent over 30 years constructing the largest unmortared rock wall in the United States. The wall was dedicated to his great, great, great grandmother's journey back from Oklahoma to the Tennessee River (the Singing River). Te-lah-nay, of the Yuchi tribe, had been taken from Alabama to Oklahoma with other Native Americans along the Trail of Tears. The site is popular spiritual destination. More to follow.

9-11 May Fri-Sun The Georgia Mineral Society's 56th Annual Mother's Day Weekend Gem, Mineral, Jewelry, and Fossil Show - Show Hours: Friday, May 9, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.; Saturday, May 10, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.; Sunday, May 11, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Great Apr 12 Field Trip collecting Petrified Wood .

We had a great day in Brilliant, Alabama collecting Brilliant wood.
There were over 20 club members participating.



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

Monday	Metal Smithing/Silver	5:00pm - 9:00pm
	Lapidary	<i>No 1st Monday in May - resume in June</i>
	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	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
	Lapidary	9:00 - Noon - First Saturday of the month



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 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>

AFMS: 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

Show Chair: Shelley Curran

Program Chair—Bill Friday

Assistant Show Chair: Jan Edmunds

Webpage: Leslie Malakowsky,

**Show Publicity Chair: Robbin Hicks
Ashlee Pool**

Auction Chair: Shelley Curran

Show Treasurer: Theresa Chivers

Field Trips: Anthony Zwilling

Mineral ID: Lowell Zoller

Pebble Pups: Suzanne Miller

Facility Maintenance: Bill Friday

2025 CALENDAR

- 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.
- 27 Jan '26 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 23 Feb '26 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm

<p>Deadline for Next Newsletter May 17, 2025</p>
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Dated material
Do not delay

April 2025

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