ROCKET CITY ROCKS & GEMS







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

Volume 57 No. 5 "We'll go to the Moon for a Rock" May 2025

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Program for the May 27 HGMS Meeting 6:00 Ron Sundholm and Ronnie Clark will show tools, techniques, and products of the art of flint knapping













Huntsville Gem & Mineral Society (HGMS) 2025. Reprinting Rights are granted for all material (except for minutes of the meeting and copyrighted articles) to any organization officially affiliated with the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS) or Southeastern Federation of Mineralogical Societies (SFMS), provided credit is given to the author, the original publication, and this newsletter.

HGMS Membership Meeting Minutes APRIL 22, 2025

Called to order 6:30 p.m. ~30 members present

Previous board minutes accepted.

2025 Auction profit \$ 5,600. after expenses.

Metals, Kathy Bowman: Monday May 5 last class for Brooch.

RJC, Leslie Malakowsky: 25+ members participating. Open to all. Layered earrings Apr 23 2-5 pm.

Donations wanted section to be added to newsletter.

Trips, Anthony Zwilling: 20 people attended Brilliant Wood outing. Investigating a trip to Tom's Wall Florence area.

Hogg Mine Machine Dig trip will be May 18th. Get your money to Anthony Zwilling or you could lose your spot.

PUPS: Suzanne Miller - The Pups had a good field trip to Cathedral Caverns.

2025 Show: Shelley Curran - 19 vendors partially or fully paid. Confirming with Lowell Zoller.

Movie night Friday: Bill Friday - Apr 25 to be on Wire wrapping.

Anthony Zwilling has created a business card for the HGMS if you are interested.

Meeting Adjourned 7:30

Speaker Bill Friday. History of Astronauts and early space program, asteroids, etc.

Great and interesting presentation!

Deb Epperson, Recording 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!

On Thursday afternoon I attended the American Federation of Mineral Societies annual meeting, the national umbrella for the Southeast Federation and the other regional societies. 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 sundae 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



Rocket City Jewelers (RCJ) News May 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 May class, 2 more opportunities are available: May 21^{st} , 6 - 9p, and May 28^{th} , 2 - 5p.

Important: Be sure you read **Judy's April 30th email** about the August Holiday Double-Spiral Chainmaille Bracelet class. She's putting together a shopping list for this class, so be sure to respond or see her in class.

To sign up for a class, please email Theresa at <u>rocketcityjewelers@gmail.com</u> 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



April - LME #6 Metal Buttons and Bead/ Jumpring Bracelet. All inclusive kit provided (with options).



16g AA Maui Blue rings 18g EC Silver rings Dangles - like pictured (charms may vary) Clasp

Kit provides:

May - Beach Theme Vipers Basket Bracelet



June - Bead and Leather Bracelet Kit plus buttons you made in April.

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.



June Class: Panel Tension Bracelet

Monday June 9, 2025,

5:00pm –9:00 pm (Note Date Change to 2nd Monday this month)

This is a very versatile bracelet. It can be constructed with any metal (or mixed metals), with and without stones. . I will have examples of ideas for the center panel.. The band can vary in width from less than ½ inch in to more than an inch so there are lots of design possibilities We will be working with a half inch band in class This Tension bracelet a little more complex than those with a simple wire band because we will be soldering a wire "peg" to the bracelet band to capture the panel. This is an intermediate project but a beginner with some experience could do it.

Kit Cost: \$8.00, The kit includes 20ga copper sheet and wire to make one bracelet. Additional base metal to make "decorations": on the panel will be available as part of the kit... Stones and cups will not be provided as part of the kit. However you may bring your own to use. We do have a limited supply for sale. .Silver will be available at market price.

<u>Certification/Safety Classes:</u> The next Certification/Safety class is <u>Tuesday</u>, May 20th. The date for the next class hasn't been set since are making some changes. Bob Goble will be handing the Safety/Certification classes after the May class.. Those on the Request List will be contacted when a date is set. He is plan-



ning on having the class more frequently than every other month so there will not be such a long wait to be certified. Continue send your name and contact information (name, email address, and cell phone number (for text messages) to **Certifications@wildivystudio.com**. get on the list for the class. Seats will be filled in the order we receive them. We only have space for 9 students per class. Currently there is still a wait list for the class it is shorter than it was a few months ago.

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)

Tools/Equipment Inventory/ Store Manager Bob Goble

Bob Goble

Safety

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 May 22, 6:30 at the Education Center

Please join us for our Pebble Pups 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!



Last month was all about caves! Randall Blackwood from the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources joined us for our meeting to continue our conversation on cave systems. We learned how caves are formed, what causes the formations that are found inside the caves, and we talked about what can be found inside caves. We had a chance to see the process of erosion in action to get a better idea of how caves are formed and we set up an experiment to see if we can make some of our very own stalactites and stalagmites.

This month we will start by checking our progress - let's see if we were able to make some stalactites and stalagmites!! We will only be talking about that briefly because then we are going to blast off to talk about space rocks! We have a special guest from the Von Braun Astronomical Society coming to talk to us about asteroids, meteors, meteorites, and all the other rocks you can find in space. Do you know what the difference between an asteroid and a meteor is? Join us to talk more about them and learn what they have to tell us about the planet we live on!







Upcoming Events

• Burritt Museum Geology Camp - June 2nd - 6th, 2025

Become a Junior Geologist! Discover where and when the Southern Gold Rush happened and investigate different types of Alabama rocks while exploring Burritt's nature trails. Enjoy making your own fossil, starting your rock collection (with a real geode to get you started), and panning for gold and gems at the sluice - along with lots of games and crafts to make a full week of fun! Registration Deadline is May 27th, 2025 and the cost is \$195 - \$245 https://burrittonthemountain.com/product/geology-really-rocks-june-2-6/

• Rocking Rocks Science on the Spot - June 7th, 2025 at 12:30pm

Cook Museum of Natural Science, Decatur, Alabama

Free with museum admission, come learn about all the awesome aspects of rocks.

Whether sedimentary, metamorphic, or igneous - rocks totally rock!

https://www.cookmuseum.org/calendar/rocking-rocks-science-on-the-spot-3/?occurrence=2025-06-07

• **HGMS Summer Picnic** - June 14th, 2025

Be on the lookout for more information to come!

• June Pebble Pups Jewelry Project - June 26th, 2025 at 6:30pm

Theresa Chivers will be leading a chainmaille patriotic pendant jewelry project for Pups who are 12 and older at the June meeting. The Pups will learn how to weave a celtic flower in red, white (silver), and blue. Advance sign up at the May meeting is required and the cost is \$5/child.

June Pebble Pups Jewelry Project - June 26th, 2025 at 6:30pm

Theresa Chivers will be leading a chainmaille patriotic pendant jewelry project for Pups who are 12 and older at the June meeting. The Pups will learn how to weave a celtic flower in red, white (silver), and blue. If you have any jewelry pliers (pliers without any teeth) please bring them. Each pup will need to use 2 pliers and open and close jump rings. I will have sign ups at the May meeting. Please sign up in advance as I only have so many kits available. If you can't make the meeting but would like a kit just email me at treasurerhgms@gmail.com. Also f you are not able to make it to the May meeting, please reach out to Theresa to submit your interest and any questions or concerns you may have. If your Pup thought the last project was difficult then they need to skip this project. Remember that advance sign up at the May meeting is required, and each project has a \$5 cost. Thanks. Theresa





The American Federation of Mineralogical So-

cieties (AFMS) sponsors the Future Rockhounds of America (FRA) program for kids under the age of 18. The HGMS Pebble Pups participate in FRA Badge Program. You can check out all the badges that our Pups can earn by visiting their page at

https://www.juniors.amfed.org/fra-badge-program/the-badges.

Pups who complete activities outside of club activities can send an email to HGMSPebblePups@gmail.com to receive credit for their activities. If your Pup would like to share what they have learned, seen, or found with the rest of the group, please let Suzanne Miller know and we can give them time at the beginning of the meeting to talk to the group! Sharing will help Pups earn their presentation and communications badges.

Is there a topic your Pup would like to learn more about? Do you have an idea for an activity that our group would enjoy? Have you found a great place to hunt for rocks, fossils, or gems? Email Suzanne Miller at HGMSPebblePups@gmail.com to share your ideas!



HGMS Field Trip to Hogg Mine



HGMS joined the Alabama Mineral & Lapidary Society from Birmingham on a field trip to Hogg Mine for a machine dig. It was a very wet and muddy day, with a severe thunderstorm interrupting the beginning of the dig, but the water washed away the dirt on top and some of our Pebble Pup group was able to find aquamarine, tourmaline, beryl, and lots of quartz. It ended up being a great dig and Chris Painter helped the Pups learn how to find and identify some of the specimens found on the property. We will be gauging interest on hosting a Pebble Pups field trip later this year to Hogg Mine. Chris will take the Pups on a guided tour of the mine and teach us about what minerals and gems can be found at Hogg Mine, how they came to be there, as well as some interesting facts about what our group might find. Pups will have a chance to look for their

own finds while we do the guided tour. If your Pup is interested in joining a field trip to Hogg Mine, please let Suzanne Miller know. We would need a minimum of 10 in our group to put it together.

Please continue collecting sand samples. Matthew Sager is coordinating the samples. On your vacation trip this summer, or even around your home, gather up a scoop or more and bring it to the Pups meeting. Identify your name, where and when you found it, plus anything special about it.

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

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.



DRILLING SMALL ITEMS

Small pieces need to be held securely while drilling to prevent them from spinning if the drill catches. Having sliced my fingers occasionally in my younger days, I avoid band-aids now by using flat-jaw pliers or a ring clamp. Pliers also save you if the piece gets hot. Put a little tape over plier jaws if needed to avoid scratches.



One of the things my students often ask to do is drill a hole through a piece of gemstone. The usual thought is to get a diamond drill, but I've been disappointed with them. I think the reason is that the tip of the drill is just pivoting in the hole and fails to cut well. When it looks like the drill isn't cutting, the tendency is to push with more force. The drill gets hot, and the diamond grit falls off.

A much better approach is to use a core drill. This is a small hollow tube with a coating of diamond grit at the business end. The diamonds easily carve out a circular arc without undue pressure or heat buildup.



Core drills are readily available from lapidary and jewelry supply companies. They come in sizes as small as 1mm and are very reasonable in price. For instance, a 2mm diameter drill is about \$6.

Chuck the core drill in a drill press, Dremel or Foredom and be sure to keep the drilling zone wet to cool the tool and to flush out debris. Also, if you're drilling a through hole, ease up on the pressure as the drill is about to cut through. Otherwise you may chip off some of the stone's back surface around the hole.

Upcoming Area Shows

June 14, 2025

New Albany Fossil Road Show, June 14, 2025, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Union County Heritage Museum in New Albany, MS. Paleontologist George Phillips will be on hand. The event is free, and attendees can bring objects for identification and/or collections to show. Call 662-538-0014 or email at jill@ucheritagemuseum.com

August 29-31, 2025

Alabama Mineral and Lapidary Society, 53rd Gem and Mineral Show, August 29th - 31st, 2025

Where: Bessemer Civic Center, 1130 9th Ave. SW, Bessemer, Alabama 35022-7801

Description: Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Adults: \$5; Teens: \$3, 12 and under free.

Alabama Mineral & Lapidary Society (lapidaryclub.com)



Mineral of the Month – Flower Stone

By Leslie A. Malakowsky

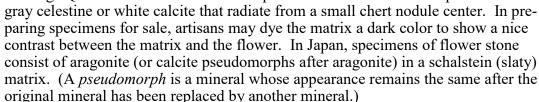
"April showers bring May flowers" - 16th century English poet Thomas Tusser

Flower stone (or chrysanthemum stone) consists of two-dimensional radiating crystals of minerals embedded in a gray limestone matrix. This assemblage resembles a "flower," particularly a chrysanthemum, in which celestite and calcite crystals are the "petals" and chert is the "stamen." Flower stone is thought to be of Permian

age (approximately 250 million years old), and it may contain more than ten kinds of trace elements such as selenium, strontium, gold, silver and bismuth. The diameters of the flowers typically range from 2 inches to 3.5 inches, but a maximum of 20 inches has been recorded. The flowers vary in shape because the petals radiate out in different directions and orientations, and the petals vary in width and length. Some petals may be longer and wider than others causing less of a chrysanthemum appearance.

Nature may expose the flowers through weathering and wave action, but the stone is frequently carved or sand blasted to expose the flowers and to form the stone into artistic shapes including cabochons. The shapes are smoothed or polished to give them a finished look for making into beautiful one-of-a-kind jewelry and art pieces. Such products are very popular in Asia. And they are becoming fairly common in mineral shows in other countries and through online sources.

The classic occurrence of flower stone is along the Yumg River, in Kiuyan County, in Hunan Province, China. The matrix is Permian age Quixia Limestone. The flower petals are blades of white to pale bluish-



In British Columbia, flower stone is a gabbro porphyry of feldspar crystals that show a distinct flower pattern in a basalt matrix. (A *porphyry* is a textual term for an igneous rock that consists of large-grained crystals in a fine-grained matrix.) British Columbian flower stone is also known as "snowflake stone" and it is similar

to Chinese "writing rock" and "rice rock." The feldspar crystals are thought to have "blossomed" in an explosion creating the flower shape. Specimens of this particular type are found only on Vancouver Island and in Japan. Classic samples show flurries of white flowers on a black background. Other samples show only a few flowers on a gray background. Some of the flowers may occur in different colors and some may resemble snowflakes, pieces of rice, or Chinese letters.

References: wikipedia.org, mindat.org, bcrockhound.com

Movie Night

The April Movie Matinee and Movie Night were almost a bust. One patron showed up for the Wire Wrapping session, and it was a very pleasant gathering. Ted Fredrickson is a new member and he came specifically looking for this topic. So there won't be any more Matinee

opportunities unless requested.

We will change to a different format with a detailed documentary on the incredibly adaptive life in the very deep ocean.

Popcorn and Soft Drinks available at the food bar for affordable prices.



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.

9-11MayFri-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 No 1st Monday in May - resume in June

Lapidary 6:00pm - 9:00pm

Tuesday Lapidary 9:00am - 2:00pm

HGMS Meetings 6:00pm - 8:30pm 4thTuesdays

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: 4thTuesday 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: Deb Epperson Treasurer: Theresa Chivers Membership - Theresa Chivers Editor: Bill Friday - 256-527-8227 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 - 2026 CALENDAR

- 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
- 24 Mar '26 Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center 7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm

Deadline for Next Newsletter June 15, 2025

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May 2025

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