

ROCKET CITY ROCKS & GEMS



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

Volume 58 #1

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

January 2026

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HGMS Meeting - 27 Jan 2026 - 6:00

Do you have trouble getting good pictures of your smaller stones and lapidary pieces? Would you like to learn a few tricks and techniques for getting better closeup pictures? Bob Kemper has been studying how to get good macro and close up pictures for several years and is going to share some of the things he learned during this meeting. After the presentation there will be a little time for some hands-on practice if you want. Bring your own camera or a recent model cell phone.



Fairy Cross /
Stauroilite

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



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Mineral of the Month – Willemite *By Leslie A. Malakowsky*

This month's mineral was inspired by one of the most popular attractions at our Annual Gem, Jewelry, and Mineral Show – the fluorescent display in the black tent (currently undergoing renovation). Fluorescent minerals emit visible light when they are exposed to shortwave ultraviolet (UV)

light. The glow stops when the UV light is turned off. Willemite fluoresces green under UV light, so it's one of the minerals in the tent. (Don't forget to check out the fluorescent display at the show!)

Willemite is a zinc silicate mineral with the formula Zn_2SiO_4 and a minor ore of zinc. Willemite is a member of the *phenakite* group of nesosilicates (minerals characterized by isolated silicate tetrahedra bound to each other by positively-charged elements). Other nesosilicates include garnet, kyanite, olivine, topaz, and zircon. Willemite crystals can have a fibrous, botryoidal (globular, resembling a bunch of grapes), or massive (shapeless, no external crystal shape) appearance. In daylight, they can occur colorless or in a variety of colors such as white, gray, black, green, blue, yellow, red, pink, and brown. Crystal twinning, in which two separate crystals share some of the same lattice points, is rare in willemite, but at least one willemite *trilling* was found in Franklin, New Jersey. (*Troostite* is a variety of willemite in which zinc is partially replaced by manganese. Troostite occurs in solid red-brown masses. It was named after the Dutch-American mineralogist Gerard Troost, who was the first to recognize it.) Willemite forms when rocks rich in sphalerite (a zinc carbonate mineral and the main ore of zinc) oxidize (undergo chemical alteration) in a silica-rich environment. Willemite may also form when hemimorphite (a zinc silicate oxide mineral) or sphalerite undergoes metamorphism in hydrothermal veins (fractures in rocks in which hot water circulates).

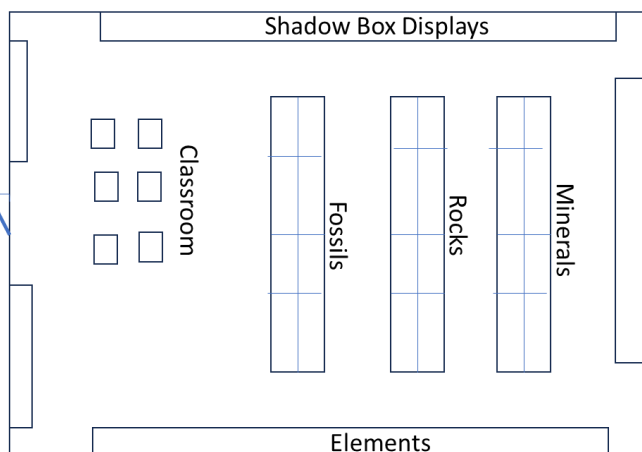
Willemite was first discovered in 1829 in a mine called *Vieille-Montagne* (French for “old mountain”) in southern Netherlands by a student at the University of Liège. He gave some samples to Armand [Lévy](#), a teacher at the university. Lévy named the mineral in 1830 in honor of King William I (1813-1840) of the Netherlands in gratitude for granting him a Professorship at the university. Today, this mineral is found all over the world, but the most well known localities in the United States are the Franklin and Sterling Hill Mines in Franklin, New Jersey. Willemite from those mines often occurs with red zincite (zinc oxide) and franklinite (an iron-rich zinc mineral that occurs in sharp black octahedral crystals and masses – see last month's “Mineral of the Month”). In some localities, willemite is associated with calcite, fluorite, hemimorphite, limonite, quartz, and wulfenite (a lead molybdate mineral) in addition to zincite and franklinite. You can distinguish zincite and franklinite from willemite because they don't fluoresce under UV light.

Willemite was used in early fluorescent tubes until it was replaced in the mid 20th century with other substances. It isn't a glamorous mineral, but for fluorescent fans, it's pure gold! Got UV?

References: wikipedia.org, mindat.org

New Natural History Museum in Huntsville

Lowell Zoller, Joe Iacuzzo, Richard Hoover, and others are in the early to mid-stages of establishing a new Natural History Museum in Huntsville. It will incorporate Lowell's and Joe's extensive mineral and fossil collections, **plus donations by willing members of the HGMS** and the Huntsville Area community. A tentative but very promising site has been located, with large space, a fluorescent room, a work room, and storage space. It is away from downtown but easily accessible by a major street, and has spacious free parking.



Metal Smithing/Silver Group by Kathy Bowman & Shelley Curran



February Project: Layered Lion Pendant

Monday 5, February 2, 2026 5:00 -9:00pm

The Project this month will be making a stacked Lion. This can be a pendant, a pin or something else entirely such as the centerpiece on a cuff bracelet. Since the price of silver has increased dramatically in the past month or so, this project is something that looks good made with brass, copper or other base metal.



The pendant has five sawn layers of 24 gauge metal, that forms the head of a male Lion when stacked together.. Patterns for both the large and small size pendants will be included. The large size is 1 7/8" long – the smaller one is 1 1/2" long.. (The patterns can be resized on a copy machine if you want a different size.) The class fee is \$7.00

We have 9 seats available. If sufficient interest we will hold another session Thursday February 5.. To sign up for this class send email to HGMS@wilddivystudio.com or sign up in person Monday and Thursday nights or at the January HGMS meeting.

Certification/Safety Classes: The next Certification/Safety class is **March 17th**. Currently there are only a few names on the list.. Send your name and contact information (name, email address, and cell phone number (for text messages) to Certifications@wilddivystudio.com. to get on the Wait List.. Seats will be filled in the order we receive them. We only have space for 9 students per class. Note: If your email is requesting a seat for more than one student, I need the contact information(name, email, and phone number) for each student.

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
Safety
Kit Manager

Bob Goble
Bob Goble
Shelley Curran

Webpage & Social Media Management

Kathy Bowman

First Monday Morning Lapidary is being suspended until Summer.

Rocket City Jewelers (RCJ) News

January 2026

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.

How to Sign Up for Classes

You can sign up one quarter at a time, or for the whole year. Please pay one month in advance so check in goes smoothly, and we can start class on time. 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. Or, you can sign up at RCJ meetings and monthly HGMS meetings.

1st Quarter 2026 Classes

Please note the following changes in our class schedule: The Woven Cuff has been moved to March. Instead, we'll have a free layered metal earring (LME) class **all month in January**. You'll receive 2 squares of metal at no charge. You can design your own LMEs using skills learned from previous LME classes such as sawing, rolling, riveting, and punching. (Please see Theresa's 12/29/25 email for more information.) The Captured Chainmaille Weave Bracelet class is still in February. The LME VIII – Paddle Drops Earrings class previously set for March will be rescheduled.

January: Free Layered Metal Earrings. Design your own LMEs.

Jan 7 & 21: 6 – 9p.

Jan 14 & 28: 2 – 5p.

February: Captured Chainmaille Weave (Variation) Bracelet. Copper rings and round beads. Kit \$5.

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

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



March: Woven Cuff. Copper wire and seed beads. Kit \$5.

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

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



Note: Should severe weather occur on any RCJ meeting day, the meeting will be canceled, and members will be notified.

**Pebble Pups
January Meeting**
Thursday, January 22nd at 6:30pm
 HGMS Education Center
 7901 Bailey Cove Road SE
 Huntsville, AL 35803



We wrapped up 2025 with a Pebble Pups holiday party. It was a great turnout! We had a potluck dinner with lots of tasty treats, we awarded lots of certificates the kids have been earning the last several months, the kids made rock art ornaments, we played games, and everyone had fun spending time together. We finished our year out by exchanging rocks! Every Pup brought a gift-wrapped rock to share with their Pebble Pup friends and we made a game of it so that no one knew what they were going to end up with but loved what they got at the end. It was a fantastic finish to a great year of learning together!



For 2026, the Pebble Pups will be taking it back to the foundation of geology – and the best place to start is learning about the three main types of rocks and the rock cycle! We are going to be learning how each type of rock is formed including the conditions that must exist, the minerals that must be present, and the processes that take place in the formation of each rock type. Then we will talk about how each type of rock can become another type of rock through the processes in the rock cycle. Rocks are everywhere and they make up the landscape around us. Understanding the rocks we are looking at help us unlock the history of where that rock was found.

We will still be following the format we adopted last year. We will break into two groups to learn about the same topic. The older Pebble Pups will get deeper into the topic and the younger Pebble Pups will focus on the foundation of the topic.



Pebble Pups Group Me

We now have a Group Me chat for Pebble Pups families. It is a place to share resources and information. We will be sharing rockhounding outings so anyone who wants to join us can come along. Hopefully it will be a great resource for everyone. The more participation we have in the chat, the better it will be!

[HGMS Pebble Pups Group Me Chat Link](#)



Colder weather makes it hard to get outside to rockhound and hunt for fossils, but there is still plenty you can do inside! You can go to the Cook Science Museum in Decatur, AL. If you are willing to drive a little farther, there is also the University of Alabama Natural History Museum in Tuscaloosa, AL or the McWane Science Center in Birmingham, AL. If you are really for an adventure, head to the Tellus Science Museum in Cartersville, GA. It

is a little more of a drive, but definitely worth the effort!



The American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS) sponsors the



Pebble Pups Cont'd

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?

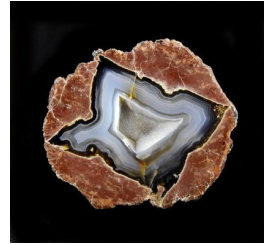


Do you have an idea for an activity that our group would enjoy? Have you found a great place to hunt for rocks, fossils, or gems? Email Suzanne Miller at HGMSpebblePups@gmail.com to share your ideas!

Monthly Rock Swaps - First Monday each Month - February 2



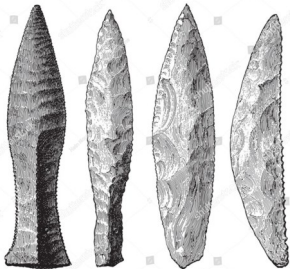
Everyone has fun looking over and trading rocks at the Education Center from 6 to 9 pm. Bring rocks to trade, or just come down to see a lot of interesting rocks. Have yours identified.



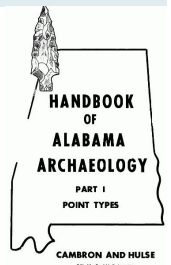
Flint Knapping Continues—Saturday February 7th, 9:00, Ed Center

The first knapping sessions have been successful with some experienced and some coming to learn the techniques. A few specialized tools needed for the art are being purchased by the Club. Come on by to practice, socialize, and/or to learn.

Cambron & Hulse is now online for free or purchase at <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/39974>



"Handbook of Alabama Archaeology: Part I, Point Types" by James W. Cambron and David C. Hulse is a scientific publication written in the late 20th century. This handbook serves as a resource for the classification and identification of projectile point types found in Alabama and nearby regions, addressing a significant gap in archaeological knowledge in this area. The work stems from extensive field research and aims to provide a systematic approach to categorizing stone artifacts based on their characteristics and contextual associations.



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

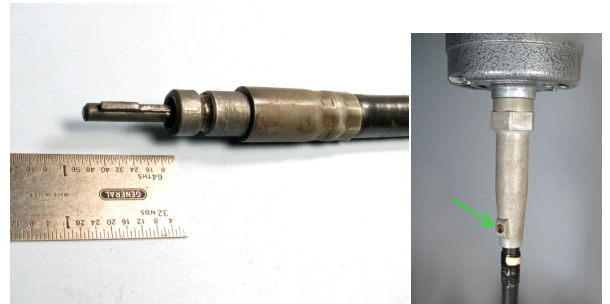


additional ways to save time, avoid frustration or improve quality at the bench. These new tips cover problems in fabrication, stone setting, casting, soldering and polishing.



FOREDOM MAINTENANCE

If you have a Foredom flexshaft, it makes sense to check it over every so often to be sure it's running properly. But how to do that? You've probably lost the little booklet that came with the unit. Well, being the good company it is, Foredom has put together an extensive set of instructions on how to do everything.



The series covers set-up, lubrication, replacing a sheath, motor maintenance, and handpiece maintenance. Few if any special tools are needed. You can access it at <https://www.foredom.net/product-category/maintenance-and-replacement-parts/>. Any repair parts needed are available from the Foredom site or from many jewelry supply catalogs. If you have any question about their products, a phone call or an email will get quick answers.

JUST A DROP

Hobby shops and model airplane stores carry small plastic dispenser bottles that are handy for putting a drop of flux, oil, or glue just where you want it. They have a length of small metal tubing coming out the top that lets you squeeze out very small drops.



I use one with a short length of tubing for oil when I'm sawing or when drilling harder metals like steel. Another bottle I found in a plastics store has a longer length of metal tubing on it. Plastics people use them for dispensing fast drying glues to join pieces of acrylic. The long metal tube lets you reach into tight places. Either of these is handy for flux at the soldering station.

New Windows in the Lapidary Room 14" Slab Saws

After all of these years, the 14" slab saws have windows in the lid, so that you can check the progress of your cut without having to stop the motor and lift the lid. They will need frequent wiping because mud will spray onto them, but that is an easy task. Thanks to Mike Sapp for providing the supplies.



2026 HUNTSVILLE GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY EXECUTIVE BOARD

President - Jan Edmunds -

Vice President - Doug Blakeslee -

Secretary: Debbie Epperson -

Treasurer: Theresa Chivers -

Membership - Theresa Chivers -

Editor: Bill Friday - 256-527-8227 -

Past President - Shelley Curran -

Directors:

James Yack -

Ashlee Pool -

James Mallonee -

Anthony Zwilling -

2026 COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Property: Bill Friday

Program Chair—Bill Friday

Webpage: Leslie Malakowsky,

Auction Chair: Shelley Curran

Field Trips: Anthony Zwilling

Pebble Pups: Suzanne Miller

Show Chair: Shelley Curran

Assistant Show Chair: Jan Edmunds

Show Publicity Chair: Ashlee Pool

Show Treasurer: Theresa Chivers

Mineral ID: Lowell Zoller

Facility Maintenance: Bill Friday

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, Matthew Sager, Theresa Chivers, Dee Dee Morton, Bill Friday

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

2026 CALENDAR

- 27 Jan '26 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 24 Feb '26 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 28 Mar '26 - **SATURDAY** Rock Auction, Education Center 8:00am
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 28 Apr '26 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 26 May '26 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- Jun '26 [Saturday - date to be determined] - Annual HGMS Picnic, Monte Sano State Park
- 28 Jul '26 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 25 Aug '26 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 22 Sep '26 - Regular HGMS Meeting, HGMS Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 9-11 Oct '26 - HGMS Fall Gem, Jewelry, & Mineral Show - Jaycee Building
2180 Airport Rd SW, Huntsville, AL 35801
- 27 Oct '26 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Ed Ctr
- 24 Nov '26 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 9 Dec '26 - Christmas Dinner - details as it gets closer
- We will have a great potluck dinner again at the Ed Ctr.
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm

<p>Deadline for Next Newsletter February 14, 2026</p>

**Dated material
Do not delay**

January 2026

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