

ROCKET CITY ROCKS & GEMS



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

Volume 58 #10

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

October 2026

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HGMS Meeting - 27 Oct 2026 - 6:00

Show recap and Show and tell—show the treasures you found

Dear friends,

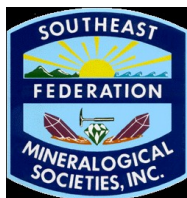
What a source of joy you are to me! To all who helped to make our show another fabulous event, thank you! ALL of the vendors talk about how friendly and helpful each of our members are, which makes this their favorite show. We are bombarded with critiques. If you have suggestions for the next show, please put them in an email to Shelley. Her email is curranshelley1@gmail.com. Any problem needs to be accompanied by a positive solution!

We had a bit of a surprise at the last meeting. Anthony has done a great job of working with the city to correct those issues. The time slot may be shorter, which will necessitate changing the format. We will let you know.

Again, let me thank each of you for the joy you bring! Happy rock hounding!

Jan

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



Huntsville Gem & Mineral Society (HGMS) 2026. 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.

Montgomery Gem and Mineral Society President Chris Rutherford update:

Chris had a head injury at work in early September. He was at the Dixie Mineral Council field trip on the 26th of September and seemed fine, but he had bleeding on his brain from the injury and was rushed to the hospital in Montgomery. He was put into an induced coma and had to have surgery on his head to relieve pressure. He was still in a coma as of our show. Update from MGMS is that Chris is slowly coming back as of Friday, 23 Oct, he was reported to be sitting up, off the ventilator and moving his arms and feet. He is still not able to talk. Please keep him and his wife Cathy in your prayers.

Membership Dues!!!

Hi All. A special thank you to all who paid their dues at the show. You have made my job easier! For those that haven't paid their dues for 2027, **your dues are due now!** Remember your membership is from October 1-September 30 the following year. I will be at the meeting on Oct. 27 to collect dues. Please help me out by paying your dues before I have to send you an email reminder! Also remember if you do not renew your membership by December 15th you will be dropped from our database and if you choose to renew after that a \$5 late fee will be applied. Thanks you for your help.

~ ~ ~ Thank You ~ ~ ~

Thank you everyone who contributed to our September display in the Huntsville library!



HGMS Scholarship Opportunities

Every year the Club offers scholarships for continuing education. There are three scholarships this year, each for 300.00 dollars. Two are available to the general membership and one solely for Instructors.

To be eligible you must be a member in good standing, apply before the deadline and not have won in the previous year.

To enter you must send an email stating your wish to enter the drawing to Shelley Curran, curranshelley1@gmail.com. Verbal and text messages will not be considered. The deadline to enter is midnight, November 10th. No exceptions.

The drawing will be held at the November meeting. We will draw for a winner and an alternate. Good Luck everyone!

HGMS Show

Thank you!!! Your participation helped make the show a success, From setting up, working with the vendors, ticket taking, demonstrating, walking around, information booth, kids area, and yes, even the drinks cart, you all put in time and dedication and helped make the 2026 HGMS Gem and Jewelry show a cusses. Our confirmed show dates for 2027 are 8-10 October 2027, with Thursday the 7th for setup. See you there!!!



*Thanks to Richard Fuller for providing these.

Alabama National Fair

GEMS & MINERALS

ADULT DEPARTMENT A4

Sponsored by:

MONTGOMERY GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY

RIBBONS AWARDED BY CLASS: FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD

“BEST OF FAIR” WINNER: RIBBON & \$100

RULES

- The workmanship of the item(s) entered must be that of the Exhibitor. Exhibitors shall not enter items that were purchased from another in their finished form.
- Fossils, Geodes and Mineral Specimens must have been found/discovered by the exhibitor.
- Exhibitors may enter one (1) item in each class.
- All entries must contain a 3x5 card identifying the item/specimen and materials used.
- ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED AT THE CREATIVE LIVING CENTER ON THE FOLLOWING DATES/TIMES (NO EXCEPTIONS):

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25TH 9:00AM – 4:00PM

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26TH 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28TH 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29TH 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30TH 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Class

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Beading (plastic or acrylic beads not allowed) | |
| 2. Cabochon | 6. Mineral Specimen |
| 3. Faceted Stone | 7. Wire Wrapped Jewelry |
| 4. Fossils | |
| 5. Geodes | |

JUDGING CRITERIA

Classes 1, 2, 3 & 7

Labeling & Appearance – 20% Quality of Stone/Sample – 40% Quality of Workmanship – 40%

Classes 4, 5 & 6

Labeling & Appearance - 40% Quality of Stone/Sample – 60%

Drop-offs for the Fair Displays start on Friday, October 25, 2026, at 9:00 am and continue until Wednesday, October 30, 2026. Pickups after the Fair begin on Tuesday, October 19, 2026 thru Thursday, October 21, 2026.

Metal Smithing/Silver Group by Kathy Bowman & Shelley Curran

October Newsletter Article

November Class: Copper Washer Bracelet

Date: Monday, November 2, 2026 (Thursday, November 4 if the Monday class is full)



This is a project from 2018 that was only taught one time so it should be new to everyone. We will be making a tension bracelet from copper washers—both purchased and washers we can make with the disc cutter. There are many ways this bracelet can be “decorated”. There are several different sizes of washers that can be combined. The metals can be textured in with the rolling mill, hammers or etched and stones can be added for color. With our own disc cutter, we can also introduce mixed metals. There are many ways to make this bracelet unique. Kit cost: \$5. (Stones and cups will be additional.)

Certification/Safety Classes: The next Certification/Safety class will be Wednesday, November 18. Currently there the request list has openings but those might fill quickly. Send your name and contact information (name, email address, and cell phone number (for text messages) to Certifications@wildivystudio.com. to get on the 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

Bob Goble

Safety

Bob Goble

Kit Manager

Shelley Curran

Webpage & Social Media Management

Kathy Bowman

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



Rocket City Jewelers (RCJ) News October 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. **Note:** If you're signed up for the **Pumpkin Earrings** class and haven't made yours yet or picked up your kit, there's 1 more opportunity: **October 28th, 2-5p.**



Remember: No meeting November 25th due to Thanksgiving. Our last meeting is **December 2nd, 2-5p, for make up.** Holiday party **December 9th.**

How to Sign Up for Classes

Be sure to sign up at least a month before class. 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. Include your **name**, **contact info**, the **class(es)** you want, and the date(s) (if you know them) you plan to take them. Or, you can sign up at RCJ meetings and monthly HGMS meetings.

Remaining 2026 Classes:



November: Square Cab with Hidden Prong Setting. Kit \$5. Wrap a square cabochon using round copper wire or silver craft wire. Choose wire only or wire w/beads). **If you haven't picked your stone with Judy yet, you can pick it in class.** Choices are: Natural Falcon's Eye, Biggs Jasper, Oyster Turquoise Orange-Blue-White, Natural Black Rutile (Rutilated Quartz), and Oyster Turquoise Pink-Blue-Orange.

Nov 4 & 18: 6 – 9p, class and make up. Nov 11: 2 – 5p, class.

December 2nd: 2 – 5p: Make up. Last meeting of 2026.

December 9th: Holiday party. Place & time TBD.

2027 Classes

November: Square Cab with Hidden Prong Setting. Wrap a square cabochon using round copper wire or silver craft wire. Choose 1 of 2 weaving options (see photo). Choose 1 of 5 stones (**1st come, 1st served**) or **text Judy to reserve one. Kit \$5.**

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

Nov 11: 2 – 5p, class.

2027 Classes

January: Braided Wire Bracelet with Beads. Kit \$5.



Jan 6 & 20: 6 – 9p, class and make up.

Jan 13 & 27: 2 – 5p, class and make up.



February: Celtic Diamond Pendant. Kit \$9. Kits are limited. Reserve yours early.

Feb 3 & 17: 6 – 9p, class and make up.

Feb 10 & 24: 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

October Meeting

Thursday, October 22th - 6:30pm
HGMS Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Road SE
Huntsville, AL 35803



The Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies (SFMS) has announced they will be continuing their “Year in Rocks” contest again for 2027. Start thinking about how you can use your rocks, minerals, gems, fossils, or even lapidary equipment to showcase the year 2027 in a way that totally rocks! The deadline for submissions is November 21st, 2026 and you can visit <https://www.southeastfed.org/contests-awards/juniors-year-in-rocks-contest> for rules and guidelines for entries. All entries must be submitted through Suzanne Miller at hgmspebblepups@gmail.com.

www.southeastfed.org/contests-awards/juniors-year-in-rocks-contest for rules and guidelines for entries. All entries must be submitted through Suzanne Miller at hgmspebblepups@gmail.com.

Are you or your child interested in learning more about lapidary techniques? The William Holland School of Lapidary Arts has a variety of unique courses to learn traditional techniques, jewelry-making, or more creative outlets like wire-wrapping, beading, or chainmaille. You can visit their website at www.lapidaryschool.org for more information and to register for courses.



The American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (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!

Would you be interested in sharing what you know about rocks, minerals, gems, fossils, or how to find/use them? We would love to have you come lead one of our monthly programs! Please reach out to Suzanne Miller at HGMSPebblePups@gmail.com to discuss.



Minerals of the Month – Orthoclase and Schorl

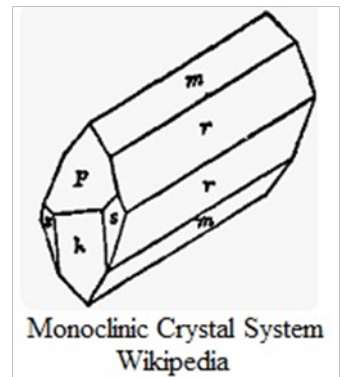
By Leslie Malakowsky



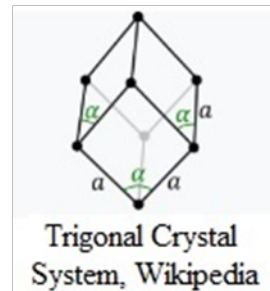
This month, I'm featuring two minerals that occur together in black and orange, the colors originally traditionally associated with Halloween before marketing added other colors. Orthoclase and schorl (black tourmaline) are a classic mineral combination. Several other black and orange minerals occur together in nature, but orthoclase is one of my favorite feldspars, and schorl tends to be overlooked compared to more colorful varieties of tourmaline.

Orthoclase is a common component of granite and other felsic (rich in minerals that form feldspar and quartz) igneous rocks. It's one of several potassium-rich members of alkali feldspar known as K-feldspar. The other members are microcline, sanidine, and adularia. (Fun fact: Adularia is the mineral in moonstone that causes *adularescence*, the milky shimmery internal glow.)

All K-feldspars have the same chemical formula, KAlSi_3O_8 , but they differ mainly in crystal structure and the temperature at which they formed. Orthoclase can be colorless, white, salmon pink to orange, greenish, and grayish yellow. This mineral is the defining mineral of Mohs hardness 6.0. It's a member of the *monoclinic* crystal system typically occurring in oblique prisms with a skewed asymmetric shape. (Fun fact: More minerals crystallize in the monoclinic system than any other crystal system.) Orthoclase was first discovered in 1782 by Italian mineralogist Ermenegildo Pini. In 1801, it was named "orthose" derived from the Greek word *orthos* (meaning "right") by French mineralogist René Just Haüy because of its right-angled cleavage planes. In 1823, it was renamed "orthoklas" (orthoclase) by German mineralogist Johann Breithaupt, who added the Greek word *klasis* (meaning "cleavage").



Schorl is the most common variety of tourmaline comprising about 95% of all natural tourmaline. It's the sodium iron endmember of the Tourmaline mineral group (an endmember represents one end of a chemical series). Its chemical formula is $\text{NaFe}^{2+}_3\text{Al}_6(\text{Si}_6\text{O}_{18})(\text{BO}_3)_3(\text{OH})_4$.



Schorl can be opaque black, brownish black or bluish black depending on the amount of iron. Schorl has a Mohs hardness of 7.0 (harder than quartz) to 7.5 (softer than topaz). It's a member of the *trigonal* crystal system typically occurring in elongated, striated prismatic crystals. Schorl was first discovered in a tin mine near a German village named Schorl, and it was first described in 1562 by German mineralogist Johannes Mathesius.

Orthoclase and schorl are two of the most abundant rock-forming minerals on Earth. They're found together in the same environments as individual specimens, namely in granitic pegmatites (intrusive igneous rocks consisting of coarse interlocking grains), high-temperature plutonic (intrusive igneous rocks that form when molten lava cools slowly) rocks, and some metamorphic rocks. They're found worldwide wherever continental granite crust is exposed. In North America, they occur in Southern California, Maine, Connecticut, and New Mexico. The most famous occurrence is in pegmatites in the Erongo Mountains of Namibia. This combination makes nice shelf specimens. Some specimens occur in a matrix of smoky quartz, hyalite opal, fluorite, or goethite. Specimens can vary widely in price. You may need to source specialty mineral dealers for the best value.

References: wikipedia.org and mindat.org

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



Bench Tips for October

EMERY BOARDS

I feel the key to getting a lustrous polish on your jewelry work is having a good selection of sandpaper handy for pre-polishing before going to the buffer. I generally start around 400 grit and then go to 800 and 1200.

While some projects do require sheets of sandpaper, my favorite way of sanding small jewelry items is to use emery boards for doing your nails. I like the ones with a thin foam core. They have enough resistance to sand the high points off a flat surface and yet give a little when you're trying to smooth off a curved surface.



These nail boards are inexpensive and come in a variety of grits. Some grits are so fine they give an almost finished surface. Pick up a few at a beauty supply company, at your local drug store, or from Amazon.

Wear Your Mask

As I understand it, any particle breathed into your lungs is never expelled. Doesn't matter if it's smoke from a fire, a piece of dust or a microscopic particle of Quartz from your diamond disc. Once in the lungs, it becomes encapsulated in mucus, develops some calcification around it, and sits there as a foreign object for the rest of your life.

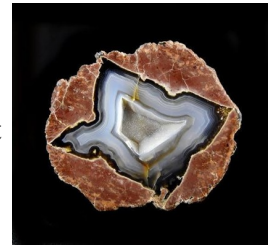
It makes sense to wear a good respirator or at least one of the N-95 masks we wear during flu season. Harbor Freight sells them very inexpensively.

* A quick review of the literature about lungs cleaning themselves shows that normally the lungs do clean themselves of foreign particles—dust, smoke, mold spores, inhaled food. But... your lungs can be overwhelmed. Wearing a mask helps reduce the workload on your lungs. Another recommendation is to work in a well ventilated environment if possible. Open the windows, use an exhaust fans or use a professional dust extraction system depending on the particulate load around your work area. And if you're cutting or polishing rock, please, please, please remember—lots of water.



Monthly Rock Swaps - First Monday each Month - November 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.



Lapidary:

Due to concerns about liability, no one under 19 will be allowed to use the lapidary equipment in the lab. They are still welcome to come in, view what is going on, and participate in the rock swap—with parent's or guardian's supervision.

Cost to use the lab has increased to \$1 per hour to ensure funds are available to replace equipment. There is a sign up for the 24" saw and only one (1) cut allowed at a time unless no one else is waiting. We could also use some items if you are so inclined to donate. Dish soap, sponges, and gallon zip lock baggies are needed.

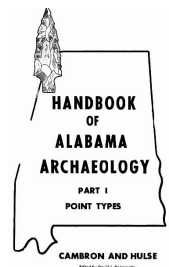
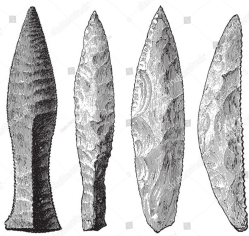
Auction;

Is your significant other telling you that you have too many rocks? Are you moving and can't take everything with you? Well, it's never too early to make donations for the Spring 2027 club auction.

We will accept any donations of rocks or related equipment. We will even pick it up from you. Just let any officer know you want to donate and we will work with you to get it done.

Available as a Free Download or Purchase:

"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. [Project Gutenberg](https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/58444)



US and International show link [Mineral Shows](#)

Some more local shows

Mobile Gem and Mineral Society show: November 27-29

Montgomery Gem and Mineral Society show: December 4-6 Garrett Coliseum, Montgomery, AL

Earth Treasures Gem and Mineral Show December 11-13 Williamson County AG Expo Park, Franklin TN

Knoxville Gem, Mineral & Jewelry Show 16-17 October Rothchild Conference Center, Knoxville, TN

Cobb County Mineral Show November 20-22 NO ENTRY FEE Cobb County Civic Center, Marietta, GA

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

Lapidary

Monday: 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Tuesday: 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

and 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Wednesday: 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Thursday: 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

1st Saturday of the Month: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Metal Smithing / Silver

Monday: 5:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Thursday: 5:00 PM – 9:00 PM

1st Saturday of the Month: 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM (irregular)

Rocket City Jewelers

1st & 3rd Wednesdays: 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

2nd, 4th & 5th Wednesdays: 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Rock Swap

1st Monday of the Month: 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Pebble Pups

4th Thursday of the Month: 6:30 PM

Flint Knapping

By appointment

HGMS Meetings

4th Tuesday of the Month: 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM



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

- 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
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 24 Nov '26 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 8 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
- 26 Jan '27 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 23 Feb 27 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm
- 27 Mar 27 - **SATURDAY** Rock Auction, Education Center 8:00am
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL
- 27 Apr 27 - Regular HGMS Meeting, Huntsville Gem & Mineral Education Center
7901 Bailey Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, AL 6:00pm

Deadline for Next
Newsletter Nov 18

**Dated material
Do not delay**

October 2026

Rocket City Rocks & Gems
James Mallonee, Editor
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