

# ROCKHOUND ROUNDUP



OCTOBER 2025

## AMLS hosts 53rd annual gem & mineral show.

### What a Weekend at the AMLS Gem Show!

On Labor Day Weekend, we were thrilled to welcome so many back to the Bessemer Civic Center for our annual AMLS Gem Show. The halls sparkled with rows of tables filled with Earth's treasures—glittering minerals, fascinating fossils, polished stones, and one-of-a-kind jewelry pieces.

Talented lapidary artists showcased their craftsmanship through stunning necklaces, earrings, gem trees, and more, while hobbyists and collectors alike found cabs, slabs, and beads to fuel their own creations. Lucky winners also went home with door prizes throughout the event, adding to the excitement.

One of the biggest hits, as always, was our kids' section. Young rockhounds had hands-on fun, and the geode cracker never failed to amaze—watching geodes split open to reveal sparkling surprises brought joy to kids and adults alike. We're grateful to the Bessemer Civic Center for providing a welcoming space and to everyone who joined us to make this year's show such a success. We can't wait to see you again next year!



Vendors filled Bessemer's Civic Center at this year's annual gem and mineral show.



AMLS members reveal beautiful crystals for the first time at the geode cracker.



## A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Hello Rockhounds',

I want to thank EVERYONE for all the wonderful support of OUR Gem Show this year. We had 30 vendors and rented space for 143 tables. For comparison, at Gem Show 2024 there were 24 vendors and about 90 tables. Next year we will be back at Bessemer for Labor Day Weekend, Sept 4-6, 2026. The vendors were thrilled with how well attended and advertised the show was, and 18 have signed up to return next year too. The Kids Area/Geode Cracker was super busy and brought back empty buckets.

The next meeting is October 10th at 6:30pm. Jr Rockhounds meet at 5:30pm. We have new members this month, and please make them feel welcome as I hope most will be able to attend this month.

The 2026 Membership Drive starts next month, and forms will be available on the web, at the workshop, and meetings. If you receive the newsletter and wish to be taken off the email list, those requests can be sent to [thelapidaryclub@gmail.com](mailto:thelapidaryclub@gmail.com).

Starting this month the newsletter is back up and running. Please send your pictures and articles to [rockhoundrundup@gmail.com](mailto:rockhoundrundup@gmail.com). Please include a brief description for each photo with names, dates, and locations.

The club has a few vacancies including Membership, Website, Hospitality, and Recording Secretary. Please consider taking a leadership role in Our Club. Descriptions can be found on the Members Only part of the [website](#).

It is scholarship time again and forms are on the [website](#), and at the end of this newsletter. I will bring a few to the next meeting too.

Yvonne wants everyone to know that on Oct 11<sup>th</sup>, she will have a Basic Wire Class at the workshop from 10am-4pm.

Thanks again everyone, the club works because we all work.

Rhea Proffitt  
[thelapidaryclub@gmail.com](mailto:thelapidaryclub@gmail.com)  
[kokomo0114@yahoo.com](mailto:kokomo0114@yahoo.com)  
205-239-0949

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## WORKSHOPS & ROCK SWAPS

- **October 11<sup>th</sup> – Wire Wrapping Workshop – 10:00 - 4:00 (or later if needed)**

Join us for a Wire Wrapping Workshop with instruction by Yvonne this October 11<sup>th</sup>. Bring any beads, cabochons, and tools you would like to create with. The workshop will have some tools and wire available if needed. The cost of this workshop is \$15. Please text your RSVP to Yvonne at 205-602-8280.

**Cost: \$15**

**RSVP: Text Yvonne at 205-602-8280**



## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

- **October 13<sup>th</sup> (Columbus Day) - Vulcan Materials' Lacon Quarry – 145 East Lacon Rd, Falkville, AL - 09:30-11:30 – Cost: FREE**

Located just north of Cullman, 1.8 miles off I-65 (exit 318), we will be joined by Vulcan Materials' own Rockhound for a tour of the quarry and a collection opportunity.

Columbus Day is an appropriate day for exploring Mississippian quarry material for minerals and marine fossils. Expect to find pyrite, quartz, crinoids, blastoids, Archimedes screws (Bryozoan skeletons) and other marine fossils from the Bangor Limestone formation. This is one of Vulcan Materials' deep quarries (300 feet deep; one source says 385 feet deep), so the digging has already been done for you!

After a brief presentation about Vulcan Materials and their Lacon Quarry from Joel Smith (Plant Manager) and Jimmy Baldwin (the quarry's resident Rockhound), we will proceed to a taped off safe area where piles of quarry material from various bands of the pit will await our exploration and collection of specimens.

There is a designated parking area, and you are required to wear close-toed shoes. No hard hat or safety vest is needed as we won't be going down into the quarry pit, but children will need to be closely monitored. Safety glasses are required if you plan to bring a hammer and chisel, but you will not necessarily need these unless you want to break up larger rocks (or be near someone using a hammer). Joel says that you should be able to pick up plenty of specimens by hand.

### Recommended items to bring:

- Hat
- Gloves
- Bucket or bag for collected specimens
- Sunscreen
- Drinking water
- Spray bottle with water
- Hand towel
- Insect repellent?
- Appropriate clothing (check weather forecast)

### Simple directions, from Birmingham:

Take I-65 N to exit #318  
 Turn left on Hwy 31  
 Go under I-65 bridge and North 1.5 miles  
 Turn right onto East Lacon Road  
 Quarry entrance is 3/10 of a mile

If you haven't signed up for this field trip, you can do so at our October club meeting (Friday the 10th). If you want to attend the field trip but won't be able to make the meeting, you are required to send me an email ([AMLSfieldtrips@gmail.com](mailto:AMLSfieldtrips@gmail.com)) ASAP. I will need to know the number in your party so Vulcan Materials can know the total number of our club members participating in advance. I hope that you can join us!

- **November 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> – Crystal Mining and Crater of Diamonds State Park – PLANNING STAGES**

Don't forget that we are trying to organize a weekend of quartz crystal and diamond mining, wholesale gem & mineral shopping, hiking & site crystal collecting in Arkansas on the weekend of November 7th, 8th and 9th. Come for all or any part of 3 days. Hotel or camping accommodations are plentiful in the Hot Springs area (not to mention some incredible spas!). At this point, we don't have enough members signed up to make this Field trip feasible, however, we are still more than 30 days out. If you'd like to go, please drop me an email at your earliest convenience or sign up at the Club meeting.

Thanks to the completion of I-22, Hot Springs is only a six-hour drive from Birmingham, or a short flight to Little Rock accompanied by a 50-minute drive to Hot Springs. I am currently exploring discounted group lodging in Hot Springs.

PS. Congratulations and thanks to all who worked to make this year's Gem & Mineral Show such a resounding success!

Rick Halbrooks  
 Chairman, AMLS Field Trip Committee  
[AMLSfieldtrips@gmail.com](mailto:AMLSfieldtrips@gmail.com)  
 205-140-0233



## MINUTES OF MEETING (MoM)

Minutes from the 08/08/25 meeting are recorded below. There was no September meeting because of the Gem Show.

### Welcomes and Introductions

- Attendees welcomed, with mention that October will be a more eventful meeting
- Audrey, Jason, and James present as guests; Sandra and Julian recognized as returning faces
- James introduced himself as a retired Air Force Russian linguist, former field trip chairman, and member of several regional clubs
- Francia noted as a visitor from Las Vegas

### Minutes, Reports, and Club Updates

- No minutes available from last month, referenced June's minutes instead
- Tyler introduced as the new newsletter editor, seeking content submissions from members
- Motion to accept previous minutes carried
- Treasurer confirmed club has funding and checks; any reimbursements to be addressed directly

### Old Business: Trailer Purchase

- Continued discussion on purchasing a club trailer (5x8, \$3,000 all in, including tax and licensing)
- New trailer found, \$1,000 less than previous suggestion, friends-and-family discount applied
- Discussion of practicalities: storage at member's secured property, towing logistics, and capacity for event equipment
- Motion made and carried to approve up to \$3,500 for the trailer purchase
- Questions about insurance and titling addressed: trailer to be titled under the club's name, insurance likely covered by towing vehicle's policy
- Anticipation that the trailer will help with storage at the workshop and event logistics

### Workshop, Socials, and Classes

- Mention of Facebook access issues for a member (Reggie) and advice to create a new account
- Cabbing Party (cabin party) scheduled for September 14th; conflicts avoided with field trips
- Wire wrapping class slated for September 13th, with call for additional volunteer instructors
- Discussion regarding equipment: lack of a 20-ton press at the workshop limits potential classes

### Field Trips and Event Planning

- Museum field trip to Alabama Museum of Natural History rescheduled to Wednesday, August 20th at 10:00 AM; includes behind-the-scenes tours
- Shark Tooth Creek field trip planned for weekend after the gem show (September); details pending
- Additional field trips planned through October and November, with flyers and sign-up sheets provided
- Trips require a minimum of 12 confirmed attendees to proceed
- Thanks given to Rick for organizing field trips

### Gem Show Preparations

- Volunteer sign-up sheets made available for show/labor roles
- Vendor lunch on Thursday organized by Bonnie; members asked to bring sweets and paper products

- Club to provide to-go boxes for vendor lunches
- Ginger unable to do TV promo, so looking for two volunteers; John Gadsden volunteered for TV appearance
- Discussion about timing, logistics, and guidelines for TV appearance
- Show requires members working certain tables to download and use Square app for payments
- Need to secure additional power cords and gaffer's tape for event setup; inventory/labels requested, members to source and bring as needed
- Microphone/speaker needs discussed; investigating rental or purchase options if venue cannot provide
- Facility space constraints prompt discussion about placing vendors in lobby vs upstairs; consensus that vendors prefer lobby due to foot traffic
- Measurements and floor planning ongoing; volunteers invited to help with further measurements
- Venue communications and vendor licensing in Bessemer flagged as challenging; each vendor required to obtain individual Bessemer vendor's licenses, increasing costs
- Ongoing search for alternative venues for 2026; size requirements around 14-15,000 sq ft, but most alternatives (sportsplex, hotel ballroom, etc.) are cost-prohibitive
- Discussion on promotional activity—Kristen credited for social media push and photo/video use
- Upstairs mezzanine at current venue available but not favored by vendors; possible alternatives being explored (e.g. registration outdoors, more lobby space)

### **Suggested Action Items**

- Finalize and execute trailer purchase, ensure titling and insurance are properly completed
- Identify and label all extension cords; secure sufficient gaffer's tape for show setup
- Members to sign up and prepare baked goods for vendor lunch; provide disposable packaging
- Secure volunteers to teach additional crafting/jewelry classes
- Organizer to contact TV station(s) to finalize PR slot; volunteers for TV spot to coordinate scheduling and talking points
- Continue facility layout planning, measure lobby and event spaces, mark locations of outlets
- Investigate or purchase portable sound system/mic if not available from the venue
- Research and pursue alternative venue options for future shows, meeting size and cost needs

## AMLS Joe and Frances Kontzen Scholarship

This scholarship may be awarded annually at the December meeting to a member of AMLS chosen by a special Scholarship Committee. It is given in memory of Joe and Frances Kontzen, longtime AMLS members and friends.

- a. Purpose. The scholarship is for one week's class attendance at either William Holland Lapidary School or Wildacres Retreat during one of the workshops sponsored by the Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies (SFMS) or the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies (EFMLS). The amount of the scholarship shall equal the double occupancy room rate at the school chosen by the Awardees.
- b. Funding. The scholarship will be funded by proceeds from the annual gem show, augmented by the General Fund if necessary. Payment will be made to the appropriate organization.
- c. Committee. The Scholarship Committee consists of a Chairman and two members, plus the President as ex-officio member. The President selects the Chairman at the July meeting, and the membership selects the other two committee members at the August meeting.
- d. Application Process. Notices to apply for the Scholarship will appear in the September newsletter. The Chairman will mail applications to members upon request. Applications will also be published on the AMLS web site for downloading, and be made available at the August, September, October, and November meetings. Application deadline is the November meeting.
- e. Selection Process. The Chairman is responsible for collecting applications, organizing the Committee's selection meeting(s), and selecting the Scholarship Awardees (and an Alternate if necessary).
- f. Class Selection. The Awardees will select a class from those available classes sponsored by the SFMS or EFMLS during the year following the award. The Scholarship must be used during that year, and is not transferable. If it is determined that the Awardee cannot use the Scholarship for any reason, the Scholarship will go to the Alternate selected by the Committee.



# Alabama Mineral & Lapidary Society Application for the Joe and Frances Kontzen Scholarship

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

~~~~~  
Number of years you have been a member of AMLS? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you regularly attend meetings? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you volunteer to help with the Annual Show in September? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you attend fieldtrips? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever attended one of the SFMS schools/classes:

[ ] William Holland in Young Harris, GA – Year \_\_\_\_\_

[ ] Wildacres Retreat in Spruce Pines, NC – Year \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to do brief article for the newsletter, give a presentation at an AMLS club meeting and demonstrate/teach at the workshop the skills you learn from your class at the school? \_\_\_\_\_

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If you are submitting this application at a club meeting, please fold in half and place it in the basket on the sign-in table by the door. If mailing, this application needs to be received by the second weekend in November.

Alabama Mineral & Lapidary Society  
8036 Parkway Drive  
Leeds, Alabama 35094

Received By _____
Date _____