

# ROCKHOUND ROUNDUP



NOVEMBER 2025

## Spotlight

Our November 14th meeting kicks off the beginning of membership renewal. Membership forms can be found in this newsletter or on our website. Please bring completed membership forms to any meeting or mail them to the shop at:

AMLS  
8038 Parkway Dr.  
Leeds, AL 35094



AMLS members collect marine fossils and more at  
Vulcan Materials' Lacon Quarry – Columbus Day, 2025  
(top & bottom)

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## A Word from Our President

Happy Fall Everyone!!

It's hard to believe it's November already and 2026 is in a few short weeks.

Our next meeting is on Friday November 14th at 6:30pm, and Jr. Rockhounds at 5:30pm. The November meeting is normally a fun and relaxed meeting starting with a shared Thanksgiving themed meal, so bring your favorite fall or holiday foods to share. I'll bring turkey and gravy.

We have had many new members join at, and since the show, and I am hoping many of you will be able to join us as the Holiday season starts to get busy. This is a good time to meet the members and find out who they are and maybe find those kindred-spirited friends you didn't know you needed but luck has you crossing paths. To quote Bob Ross, "Only happy accidents".

I would like all the Board Members and Committee Chairs to come, as we will be doing Installation of Officers.

This is the time of the year for Scholarship forms to be turned in. To remind everyone, last year's awards went to Jillian Jordan and Don Hill. They will be part of the committee picking this year's awards so please get those Scholarship forms in by the end of November.

As I look back at this last year, I know that I dropped a couple things along the way as others have for one reason or another. I was happy to take on the challenge of Gem Show Coordinator (Chair) and hadn't considered any other "job". I've learned a lot, like zoom meetings don't work and the workshop is a good place for me to get "admin" type work done. Another thing I've seen this year is how many of our board members "work" alone in their "jobs". We all have something to contribute, we are a collective of smart, talented, caring, people. Every Club Officer and Committee Chair could use some help. This club can only continue if we all pick up a small piece of the "job" to carry forward. I see so many doing the same job for years and it can be so tiring. So, let me make it official and hang out the Help Wanted sign. Every Officer and Committee Chair could use help in some way. Please ask questions, the by-laws have the official definition of each office and committee, and I will bring copies for everyone to read.

As the collective group we need to make some hard decisions about what we want to be and how we want to be. Do we want a workshop, classes, field trips, a gem show, maybe even smaller groups that are part of the club, like Jr Rockhounds, or even a community outreach group that goes to schools and libraries for speaking events? The Gem Show's primary purpose is to make the funds needed for a workshop. I think we also need to look at how each job is defined and maybe rewrite a few of them. Please consider applying today, no experience needed, I know, you "Hired" me.

Rhea Proffitt  
AMLS President & Gem Show Coord.  
[thelapidaryclub@gmail.com](mailto:thelapidaryclub@gmail.com)  
[kokomo0114@yahoo.com](mailto:kokomo0114@yahoo.com)  
205-239-0949





# Workshops & Rock Swaps

- **October 30<sup>th</sup> – Cabbing Party – 12:00 pm- 4:00 pm**

Come hang out, visit, and learn new skills at the Cabbing Party! Everyone is encouraged to bring a plate of snacks or goodies to share, and drinks will be provided. Remember, equipment use that day is free!

## Other Announcements

### HELP WANTED

**The following committees have openings and need your support.**

**Website:** The Web Site Committee shall keep the club's website current and functioning properly. This includes posting information about meetings, the workshop, classes etc. The officer responsible for submitting information to the site retains final decision-making authority regarding the information posted.

**Hospitality:** Assist in setting up the front table and food table at meetings. This can be a small group of two or three people who work together, so this does not become too much for one person trying to be at every meeting. Responsibilities also include greeting members and visitors, and making sure everyone signs in.

The Hospitality committee shall aid in implementing the monthly programs or other society entertainment by coordinating volunteers for refreshments.

**Sunshine:** The Sunshine committee shall keep in touch with all members and notify the President when anyone is ill, injured, or has experienced a significant family event. The chair shall coordinate with the Corresponding Secretary. This committee can even send out birthday cards to members and send a list of upcoming birthdays to the newsletter chair to be published each month.

**Other:** John Wild, our Treasurer, needs someone who can help with deposits and assist when he is out of town or at Wm Holland. Rhea has been doing this, however, it needs to be delegated to another club member.



# JUNIOR ROCKHOUNDS

## Mark Your Calendars: Fossil Fun Ahead!

Join us on November 14th as we dig into the fascinating world of fossils! We will explore how these ancient treasures formed, learn to identify common fossils found right here in Alabama, and discover what they can tell us about creatures that lived millions of years ago. Whether you're a budding paleontologist or just curious about prehistoric life, this meeting is one you won't want to miss. Bring your questions and any fossils you would like to share!

See you there, rockhounds!

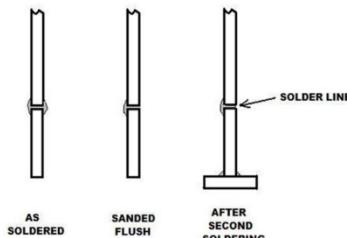


Allison Reaves  
AMLS, Junior Rockhounds



# Bench Tips

## AVOIDING SOLDER LINES



After finishing a soldered joint on say a bezel, have you ever seen it reappear after you've soldered the bezel to a base plate? What's happening is that every time you heat a soldered piece to the temperature that solder flows, the liquid solder seeps a little more into the surrounding metal. This leaves a small furrow where the solder had been sanded off flush at the joint. To get rid of the furrow, you have to re-sand the joint area down to the bottom of the furrow.

To avoid this when I have another soldering operation to follow, I try to leave a little extra solder on my joints. For instance, when trimming off excess base plate from around a bezel, I leave a paper thickness of excess plate material whenever possible until I'm done with all the soldering.

Of course, this isn't always possible like when a soldering operation prevents you from gaining access to an area for final sanding and polishing. Coating the finished solder joint with ochre seems to help a bit but is not a complete solution.

## LOOSE HEADS



Flying off the handle is never good, particularly if it's a hammerhead. The traditional way to tighten a loose hammerhead is a bit of work with wedges, but if the head is basically secure, there's a fast and easy way to tighten a loose head for about 50 cents - superglue.

Simply put a couple drops in from the handle side, let it set up, and then add a few drops from the top side. Be sure to get the thin super glue, not gel as it penetrates better. Packages of superglues are usually available at the 99-cent store.

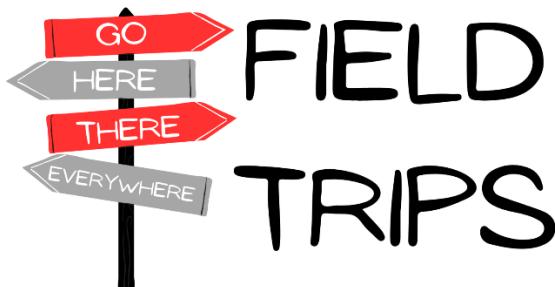
Note that this is only a safe practice if the hammer head is just a little loose but is basically secured onto the handle. Gluing is not a fix for a hammerhead that has come off the handle or is at risk of coming off.

Happy hammering,

Brad Smith

[BradSmithJewelry@gmail.com](mailto:BradSmithJewelry@gmail.com)

See More of my Smart Solutions for Jewelry Making at <http://amazon.com/dp/B0BQ8YVLTJ>



# AMLS Field Trip Committee Report:

## November 2025

We had 18 members participate in our Columbus Day field trip to Vulcan Materials' Lacon Quarry. It was a very productive event with many impressive finds including blastoids, crinoids, bryozoans, shark teeth, horn coral, colonial coral, and brachiopods to name a few, as well as some interesting calcite clusters. Our group included a family of new members and some veteran members on their first field trips with our club.

**Big news!** Our club will be hosting a Dixie Mineral Council (DMC) Field Trip Saturday January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

See the information page on the Cedar Creek Reservoir trip elsewhere in this newsletter. The last time we hosted a trip to this location, we had 75 attendees, with members of other DMC clubs from all over the Southeast joining our members collecting impressive fossils off the bed of the lake. Jim Lacefield highly recommended this location for one of our field trips.

In case you haven't heard, we cancelled the November field trip to Arkansas as there were too few folks who signed up. The Board asked that we try again at a warmer time next year (maybe May or June?). In lieu of a field trip this month, I suggest that you look into the **Cobb County Gem & Mineral Society's** Annual Show November 21-23 at the Cobb County Civic Center (548 S Marietta Parkway SE, Marietta, GA – NW suburb of ATL). FREE admission and parking. Friday & Saturday 10-6 and Sunday 10-5, EST. My son and his family live in Marietta; I try to avoid the I-20/I-285/I-75 route by taking the Lithia Springs/Austell (Hwy 6 North) exit when I visit them. Take Hwy 6 north 1.4 miles; turn right on Maxham Road/Hwy 5 and stay on 5 until you get to Atlanta Street SE Street (about 10 miles). Turn left and go 1.5 miles on Atlanta Street to turn right in .6 mile on Old Clay St. Go 800 feet then turn right on Hwy 120 (S Marietta Pkwy, SE). The Civic center is .3 mile on the right. If you drive over or back during lower traffic times (early morning on Saturday or Sunday, maybe?) it will likely be quicker to go the I-20/285/75 route. Check traffic on your GPS, if you have it, before you get to the Lithia Springs exit and before heading back to Birmingham.

Also note that the **Montgomery Gem & Mineral Society** is holding their annual Gem, Mineral & Jewelry show December 6-8 at the Garrett Coliseum, 1555 Federal Drive, Montgomery. Admission is \$2 for adults; 18 and under FREE. Show times are 9-6 Fri & Sat, 11-4 on Sunday. Traffic on I-65 is not much better than Atlanta, thanks to an additional lane being added on each side, including widening bridges, from Alabaster to Calera...7 days a week, not to mention year-round beach and snowbird traffic, so check your GPS. Hwy 31 between exits can be used to get around areas of the interstate that are at a standstill.



## SAVE THESE DATES:

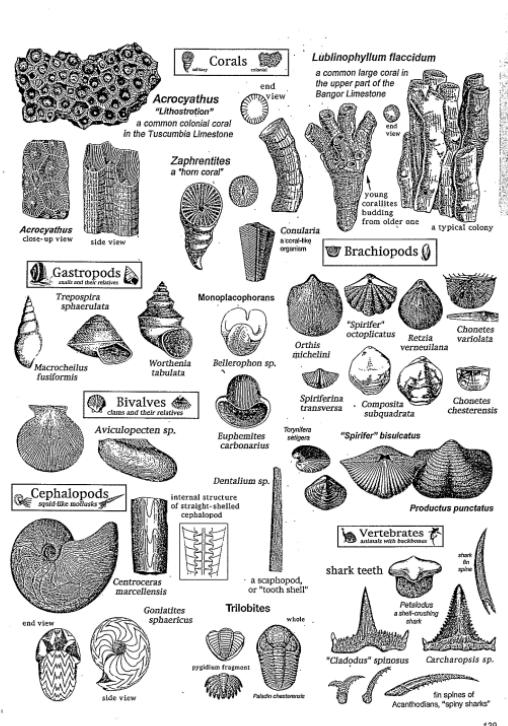
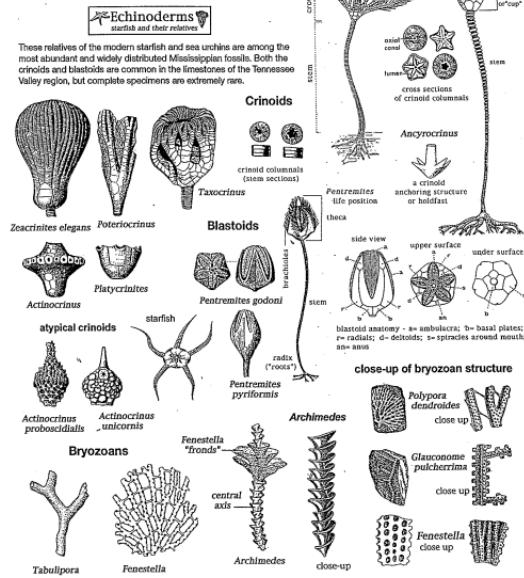
## *Early Notice On 2026 Field Trips*

## January

**Saturday January 24<sup>th</sup> - Cedar Creek Reservoir** (see my report and attached DMC flier immediately following this section) Below is what we'll be looking for at Cedar Creek!

## *A Quick Guide to Some of Alabama's Mississippian Period Fossils*

Around 325 million years ago much of what is now north Alabama lay under a warm, shallow sea. This Late Mississippian Period ocean teemed with a variety of organisms, some of which have left behind fossils in the rocks of the region. Here is a brief look at a few of these major types of fossils from Alabama's Mississippian-aged rocks.



## February

Saturday February 28<sup>th</sup> - Tellus Science Museum/ Weinman Mineral Gallery (Cartersville, GA)

This was very popular last year as a cold weather field trip; over 2 dozen attended. In addition to a private tour led by the museum's Curator, Ryan Roney (who holds degrees in both Geology and Paleontology), we're adding a rock dig to our 2026 outing. I'm in the process of arranging for a few piles of tailings from Vulcan Materials' Bartow Quarry to be brought to a remote area of the Tellus Museum's property. The museum has already approved this; I'm waiting on Vulcan Materials to approve my plan. If you've never been to the Tellus Museum, don't miss this one! Ask anyone who attended our field trip last January. They also have an awesome planetarium in the museum and an observatory building in the museum yard. I'm working on a discounted admission charge.



## March

TBA

## April

**Saturday April 11<sup>th</sup> - The Sylacauga Marble Festival (Sylacauga, AL) [Magicofmarblefestival.com](http://Magicofmarblefestival.com)**

Our club members will be given a private bus tour of the original marble quarry, renowned as the source of the most pure white crystalline marble in the world (also known as Alabama Marble). Many of the buildings and sculptures in Washington DC and in buildings all over the country utilize Alabama Marble. Sculptors prize AL marble for its fine texture in addition to its purity. As part of the festival, several sculptors will be demonstrating their skills, carving statues and other artwork in the Sylacauga library. Lots of additional activities will be going on all day, including a scavenger hunt, lectures, discussions on the operational components and equipment used in Marble harvesting, etc. We'll meet at 9:45 for our 10:00 bus tour, which is limited to the first 30 who sign up. Stay tuned for more details as they are available. No admission charge, that I know of.

Rick Halbrooks

Chairman, AMLS Field Trip Committee

[AMLSfieldtrips@gmail.com](mailto:AMLSfieldtrips@gmail.com)

205-140-0233



# DMC Field Trip Sharing Program

The Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc



The Friendly Federation - Founded in 1976 to serve

[www.southeastfed.org](http://www.southeastfed.org)

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An Official Field Trip of the Alabama Mineral & Lapidary Society (Birmingham, AL) (HOST)

**Saturday, January 24, 2026**

**Meet at 10:00 AM Central Time**

**Franklin County, AL**

**No Attendance Limit**

**Registration Required (Link is below)**

**Permit Fee: \$8.50/day for participants 16 - 64 years old**

**Others: Permit fee not required**

**TRIP:** Collecting Mississippian Marine Fossils on the shoreline and bed of a reservoir when the water is at its lowest level of the year. This is a favorite site for finding larger and more complete marine fossils.

**COLLECTING:** Mississippian marine fossils. Possible finds include crinoids stems and heads, horn coral, brachiopods, blastoids, cephalopods and sometimes arrowheads. Various interesting tumbling rocks can be found along the shoreline.

**BRING:** Most of the fossils can be collected by picking them off of the exposed lakebed. Hard core collectors may want to bring chisels, hammers, shovels, protective goggles, etc. No power tools (including battery powered) are allowed.

It is recommended that you bring your lunch, collecting containers, bag or bucket, scrub brush, spray bottle, bubble wrap/envelopes or paper to wrap your finds, drinking water, old shoes, a hand towel or golf towel, wide brim hat and weather appropriate clothing. Alabama weather in late January can vary widely, so check weather forecasts for the Russellville, Alabama area the day before. Layering is always a good idea.

**TERRAIN/SPECIAL CONDITIONS:** There is plenty of paved parking and all roads are paved. There are restrooms next to the parking lot.

**FEE:** An \$8.50 permit is required for all participants aged 16 to 64 and can be purchased at the meeting site. There is no permit required for children 15 years old and younger or adults 65 and older.

**CHLDREN (Yes):** Children are welcome but need to be supervised at all times by an adult.

**PETS (Yes):** All pets must be on a leash. This means cleaning up after too.

**FACILITIES:** There are Men's and Women's restroom facilities on site. Food, drinks, ice, etc. are available for purchase at the meeting site.

**REGISTRATION:** Click [here](#) to fill out a registration form. If you are unable to attend the trip, **please be considerate** to your fellow rockhounds and let us know as soon as possible so someone on a potential waiting list can take your slot(s). **(Rick: The registration link is not ready yet, but it will be ready soon -- Lori)**

**DIRECTIONS AND WHERE TO MEET:** Directions and meeting place details will be emailed to registered participants.

**CARPOOLING:** The registration form has a place for you to indicate if you need a ride; if you can offer a ride; or if you would like to drive or share a carpool ride. If you choose any of these options, your name, email address, and club name will be shared with other members who also choose one of the options. Then, you can communicate with one another to arrange carpools.

**CONTACT:** Rick Halbrooks, 205-410-0233, [AMLSfieldtrips@gmail.com](mailto:AMLSfieldtrips@gmail.com)

**IMPORTANT:** DMC field trips are open only to members of clubs in the SFMS DMC field trip sharing program. SFMS DMC club members are covered by liability insurance and they are bound by the AFMS code of ethics (click [here](#) to read them), but the general public is not and could jeopardize access to a collecting location. **Please do not post DMC field trip information where the general public can access it.**

[Click here for DMC Field Trip Attendance Policies](#)

[\*\*Click here for the DMC Field Trip Schedule\*\*](#)

**Clubs scheduled to host DMC Field Trips in the next 6 months**

**2026**

February - Aiken Gem Mineral and Fossil Society (Aiken, SC)

March - Mid-Georgia Gem and Mineral Society (Macon, GA)

April - Middle Tennessee Rockhounds (Nashville, TN)

May - Kanawha Rock and Gem Club (South Charleston, WV)

June - Lowcountry Gem & Mineral Society (Charleston, SC)

July - Henderson County Gem & Mineral Society (Hendersonville, NC)

DMC e-mail: [dmc@southeastfed.org](mailto:dmc@southeastfed.org)

Website: <https://www.southeastfed.org/sfms-field-trips/dmc-field-trip-program>

DMC is a program of the Field Trip Committee of the Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc.

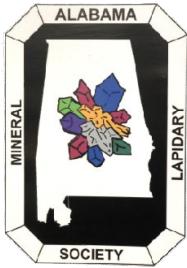
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"Earth first...we'll collect on the other planets later."

## **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, long-time 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? \_\_\_\_\_

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 _____

Hello Member!

2026 is the year our club is going to become full functioning again and I am excited.

Each of us has something we can contribute, I would like for each member to think about where they see themselves fitting in for 2026. I am especially hopeful that everyone that can, will take an active role in our club. Let's talk.

Every member is being asked to fill out a renewal application in its entirety. We are beginning 2026 with a new membership chairman and a new list and we need your completed application to include you as a member on this list. Even if you think nothing has changed, we need a new renewal application for our file.

Sincerely,

AMLS Leadership

Club meetings are the second Friday each month (except September) doors open at 6 and the meeting starts at 6:30 with a pot-luck supper

Meeting place is the Cahaba Heights Methodist Church in Cahaba Heights

The website is at [www.lapidaryclub.com](http://www.lapidaryclub.com) visit every once and awhile. Share your pictures and any other information by emailing [webmaster@lapidaryclub.com](mailto:webmaster@lapidaryclub.com)

Visit the Members Only pages for club resources and field trip information.

The Rockhound Roundup newsletter is emailed each Monday before the Friday Meeting please read your newsletter to get the latest information that is being shared by members.

Your club needs members to join one or more of the club committees. When you join a committee you learn what's going on and how to best take advantage of club resources.

“the club works for its members when the members work in the club”

**Alabama Mineral & Lapidary Society****Membership Renewal Application**

rev.02.10.25

[  ] Renewal [  ] Reinstatement

Date \_\_\_\_\_

[  ] Family \$25 (add adult family \$10) [  ] Single \$20 [  ] Student \$15

Family members must live in the same household - children 18 years or under living at home

*( Please write legibly so we can record your information correctly )*

Adult Head of Household \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Day/Mo \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

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

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone (        ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Club Interest \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse or Other Adult \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Day/Mo \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone (        ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Club Interest \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Children 18 years or under living at home (or additional adult family member living at home)

Age	Birthday
	/
	/
	/
	/

Email: [membership@lapidaryclub.com](mailto:membership@lapidaryclub.com) for questions regarding this application**mail this completed form along with your check payable to: AMLS  
AMLS Membership - 8036 Parkway Drive - Leeds, Alabama 35094****your ID Badges will be mailed to your home address**

( for office use only below )

Received by \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Paid \_\_\_\_\_ I.D. Card \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Confirmation No: \_\_\_\_\_ Welcome Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Receipt No: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_