

ROCKHOUND ROUNDUP



AUGUST 2026

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Spotlight



Our 53rd annual gem and mineral show is quickly approaching and volunteers are needed! See our President's Address for additional details.

See you there!

Join us this Saturday at The Cook Science Museum and Mining Company. More details are available in the Field Trips section. Hope to see you there!



Workshop Parking

Construction in front of the AMLS Workshop has concluded and street side parking and access is now available!



A Word from Our President

Hi Everyone,

I hope everyone is enjoying the last days of summer. Some families may be squeezing in one final vacation before the kids head back to school.

We are in the home stretch with just four weeks until the show. We will again be at the Bessemer Civic Center, Labor Day weekend, Sept 4th, 5th, and 6th. I added an event page on Facebook, and it is sharable, so pass it around to all your friends and family. I could use some help from members who are more social media savvy than I.

Casey is again going to coordinate with volunteers and will have a sign-up form both on-line and at the upcoming meeting.

Bonnie has volunteered again this year to do the vendor lunch on Thursday. Donations of snacks and sweets, either homemade or store bought would be greatly appreciated, and drinks too.

The tables will be delivered to the center on Wednesday afternoon for set-up, and Thursday the vendors arrive to set up their booths.

But mostly what's needed is smiling faces and a willingness to help.

Remember this is the Club's big fund-raiser for the year, it supports a lot of what we do, including the Workshop. We have an opportunity to participate in the ALMNH Fossil Fest on September 12 in Tuscaloosa, the Saturday after the gem show. I would like to accept this invitation and promote our club to people in Tuscaloosa County, but I'll need three or four volunteers to help. I also need to let the museum know within the next couple of weeks whether we can attend. Do I have any volunteers?

Thank you to all the volunteers who help keep our club running. We could not do it without you. Stay safe, and I look forward to seeing everyone again soon.

Rhea Proffitt

AMLS President & Gem Show Coord.

thelapidaryclub@gmail.com

amlsgemshow@gmail.com



IN MEMORIAM

Honoring the Members of Our AMLS Family



Reba Kaye Blackerby, age 83, of Chelsea, passed away on July 29, 2026.

Reba Blackerby was a woman of remarkable creativity, curiosity, and compassion whose love for nature, family, and the beauty of God's creation touched everyone who knew her.

A gifted artist, Reba had a lifelong passion for lapidary work. Her home was filled with beautiful rocks, gemstones, and handcrafted jewelry, each with its own story that she joyfully shared. Her appreciation for the outdoors was evident in her love of exploring creeks, panning for gold, hiking mountain trails, and reaching the summit of Minnehaha Falls.

Reba cherished countless family trips to the cabin at Glen Cove in the North Georgia Mountains. Evenings there were often spent gathered together, listening as she shared unforgettable stories of the Blue Ridge Mountains, treasured friendships, and adventures from years gone by. Blessed with an extraordinary memory, she had a remarkable gift for bringing the past to life through her storytelling.

While living in Japan, Reba met a Japanese painter whose friendship inspired her love of painting, adding another dimension to her artistic talents that she carried throughout her life.

Her heart was as beautiful as her artwork. Reba had a deep love for animals and rarely met a stray she wouldn't try to help. Her beloved dogs, Susie and Lucy, were faithful companions and brought her great joy.

Above all, Reba's greatest pride was her family. She leaves behind a loving legacy through her four children, ten grandchildren, and ten great-grandchildren, who will forever treasure her warmth, creativity, wisdom, and unconditional love.

She is survived by her husband, J.B. Blackerby; her son, Dennis Blackerby (Lynette); her daughters, Larisa Blackerby, Tracey Miller, and Pam Edwards; her grandchildren, Bradley Hughes, Brooke Hughes, Rachel Colley (Si), Daniel Blackerby, Gage Callahan (Lauren), Emily Dunn (Coty), McKenzie Callahan, Hugh Daniel Edwards (Kaelee), Arlen Outland, and Xavier Miller; and her great-grandchildren, Chloe, Gabe, Wilder, Livi Kate, Silas, Easton, Kiaa, Khloe, Kylie, and Barrett.

Reba's life was one of kindness, adventure, and enduring love. Her legacy will continue to live on in the stories she shared, the beauty she created, and the countless lives she touched.



Club Events

8/30/2026: Cabbing Party, AMLS Workshop, 8036 Parkway Drive SE, Leeds, AL, 12pm-4pm

Workshop Hours

The AMLS Workshop is located at 8036 Parkway Drive SE, Leeds, AL

Parking is now open in front of the shop!

Tuesdays / Saturdays (12pm-4pm)

Thursdays (4pm-8pm)

Shows & Swaps

August 21st-23rd: [Bellpoint Gem Show](#) • Cobb Civic Center, 548 South Marietta Parkway, Marietta, GA 30060 • Friday 10am until 6pm, Saturday 10am until 6pm, Sunday 10am until 5pm • \$15 at the door, \$12 in advance.

September 4th-6th: **Alabama Mineral & Lapidary Society Gem & Mineral Show** • • Bessemer Civic Center, 1130 9th Ave SW, Bessemer, AL 35022, Bessemer Civic Center • Friday 9am until 6pm, Saturday 9am until 6pm, Sunday 9am until 4pm
• Adults: \$5, Teens & Seniors: \$3, 12 & under: FREE

September 11th-13th: [Forsyth Gem, Mineral, Fossil & Jewelry Show](#) • Winston-Salem Fairgrounds (Gate 9) • Friday 10am until 6pm, Saturday 10am until 6pm, Sunday 11am until 5pm • Adults: \$5, Kids free with adult.

September 18th-20th: **Mountain Area Gem & Mineral Association Land of Sky Gem Show** • Land of The Sky Event Venue, 39 Spring Cove Road, Swannanoa, NC 28778 • <http://www.AmericanRockhound.com>

October 9th-11th: [Huntsville Gem & Mineral Society Show](#) • Huntsville Jaycee Community Center, 2180 Airport Road SW, Huntsville, AL 35802.

November 20th-22nd: [Cobb County Gem & Mineral Society Show](#) • Cobb County Civic Center, 548 South Marietta Pkwy., Marietta GA 30060.

November 27th-29th: [Mobile Rock & Gem Society Annual Show](#) • Abba Shrine Center, 7701 Hitt Road, Mobile, AL 36695.

December (TBD): [Montgomery Gem, Mineral & Jewelry Show](#) • Garrett Coliseum, 1555 Federal Drive, Montgomery, AL 36107.



Other Announcements

The Lula Lake Land Trust owns the Durham mines fossil fern site, a favorite collecting spot for many of us. Its staff has asked me to spread the following message to all mineral and fossil clubs:

Collecting fossils at the Durham mines is by permission only. Clubs must make prior arrangements with the Lula Lake Land Trust to schedule a field trip to the site. Contact Daniel Roberts at daniel@lulalake.org or 404-405-2876.

Collecting fossils at the Durham mines without permission is considered trespassing and will jeopardize future club trips to the site. Please pass this important message to your club and other clubs and fellow collectors so we don't lose another great collecting spot.

Jose Santamaria

Vice President, Rome Georgia Mineral Society

Executive Director Emeritus, Tellus Science Museum



August Birthstones

By Yvonne Foster

August is fortunate to have three recognized birthstones. The first, and most known, is peridot. It was recognized as the official modern August birthstone in 1912 and occurs in lime to olive green colors. It forms deep in the earth and has been found in meteorites.

Second is spinel, which was added as a companion stone fairly recently. It occurs in a wide range of colors such as pinks, reds, blues and purple.

Third is the original historical gemstone for August, sardonyx. Unlike spinel and peridot which occur in translucent forms which are usually faceted, sardonyx is opaque and often banded or layered in orderly flat layers of white and reddish brown. This lends itself to beautiful cabs and is a favorite for cameos and any carvings that can benefit from contrasting layers. Historically it was also a stone used in seal rings and in the Bible it is the stone on each of the High Priest's shoulders with the names of the 12 tribes engraved on them, six to a side. It is also mentioned in Revelations as a layer in the foundation of New Jerusalem.

If you want to dig for them, the major deposits in the U.S. are Arizona and Hawaii for peridot, while sardonyx is found in the Lake Superior area and the western states, as well as New York and California.

If you want to dig for these in Alabama, there are only microscopic specimen deposits of peridot and spinel. However, we do have deposits of sardonyx in both Blount and Jackson counties which are both good enough quality and quantity to dig, if permission of owners could be obtained.



Bench Tips by Brad Smith

Layout Tools



Dimensions on some features of a design can be fluid while others must be accurate for the design to work. When precision on a piece is important, good layout techniques are essential.

These are the tools that I rely upon to get holes in the right place, to achieve correct angles, and to cut pieces the correct length.

I like crisp sharp lines to follow, so I often coat surfaces with a dark marker and scribe my layout lines onto the metal. A square makes quick work of checking right angles or marking where to

cut, and the thin centerpunch helps me mark a place to drill holes exactly where I want them.

Finally, a good set of dividers is probably my favorite layout tool. They let me quickly mark a strip for cutting, swing an arc, and divide a line or curve into as many equal segments as I need. I keep at least one set of dividers in every toolbox.

Shining Up Your Chains

After a usual polish, the best way to give your silver chains a great shine is to tumble them with steel shot.

In my classes, we used a mixture of different shapes of stainless-steel shot in a rotary tumbler along with a half cup of water and a drop of soap. 30-45 minutes gives a great shine.

Happy hammering,

Brad Smith

BradSmithJewelry@gmail.com

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



AMLS Field Trip Committee Report **August 2026**

It's been a very busy summer so far for AMLS members in Preparation for our Annual Rock & Gem Show coming up in early September (9/4-9/6). **A couple of events involving Field Trips and our Club are coming up in August & September that I'd like to bring to your attention (again):**

August

Saturday August 15th (indoors!)- The Cook Science Museum and Mining Company (Decatur, AL)



This will be an afternoon field trip, as they are open Noon to 5:00 pm in the Summer. AMLS Group rate \$13/\$17 - Child*/adult (* 3-14 years old). The Cook Museum is very impressive and relatively new with plenty of geology, mineral, gem, cave, and fossil exhibits + an outdoor Mining Company. **Our group will be meeting at 12:30 in the lobby. It is important that you identify yourself as being with AMLS to get the special group rate at the admission counter.** The museum has an outdoor Mining exhibit with a rock/gem sluice for panning; there is an additional charge for mining bags if you want to mine your own gems. If you plan to join us, please let me know by emailing me - AMLSfieldtrips@gmail.com or just show up!

Parking is free, right next to the museum! Website: www.cookmuseum.org

September

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS NEEDED (also indoors!)

September 4th, 5th, & 6th – AMSL Annual Gem and Mineral Show (Bessemer, AL)

Pass the word!



FIELD TRIPS



Happy hounding,

Rick Halbrooks

Chairperson, Field Trip Committee

E: AMLS fieldtrips@gmail.com | P: 205-410-0233

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 visit every once and awhile. Share your pictures and any other information by emailing 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

Date _____

Membership Renewal Application

[] Renewal [] Reinstatement

rev.02.10.25

[] 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 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: _____

Lapidary Club Field Trip Survey

2026/2027 seasons

1. How many organized rock/mineral/fossil field trips and/or digs have you participated in?

	Total (incl. w/Club)	With AMLS
None	☐	☐
1– 5	☐	☐
6–10	☐	☐
>10	☐	☐

2. Field Trips that I'm interested in doing with the Club:

- ☐ Rock/Mineral/Gem Digs
- ☐ Fossil Digs
- ☐ Natural History Museum visits
- ☐ Cave trips
- ☐ Other suggestions _____

3. I'm up for field trips in the following proximity to Birmingham:

- ☐ Local/day trips (< 2 ½ hour drive, each way)
- ☐ Overnight trips/adjacent states
- ☐ Multi-night trips (w/Camping or Hotel stays)

4. Please list any digs that you would like to see on the Club's 2026/27 field trip list (location?):

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. Please star the digs/field trips in question # 4 that you have personally done in the past.

6. Are there digs that you've done that you wouldn't recommend...and why?

7. My comfortable activity level: (please check all that apply)

- ☐ **Easy Going** – drive up to site; short/level walks; sifting & site collection
- ☐ **Moderate** – short hikes; stream work; light digging; some uphill and down hill
- ☐ **Demanding** – longer hikes; steep grades; digging; hammer & chisel work; climbing

OPTIONAL:

Age (please circle one) < 16 17-25 26-50 51-64 65+

Name _____

years as an AMLS member (please circle one) < 1 2-3 4-9 > 10

Are there any other suggestions or comments that you would like to share?

Thank you for participating in this survey!

If you complete this at the Club meeting, please give your completed survey to Rick Halbrooks, Chair of the Field Trip Committee. If you are completing this survey on-line or printing a hard copy to complete at home, please image your completed survey with your cell phone and email it to AMLSfieldtrips@gmail.com. The sooner I receive these, the quicker I can take your responses into consideration for our 2026/2027 field trips. I'd like to have all these surveys completed and returned no later than our next 12/31/2025.

- RH/AMLS