

The official bulletin of the Dothan Gem & Mineral Club, Inc.

# ROCKHOUNDS HERALD

920 Yorktown Road, Dothan, AL 36301-4372

[www.wiregrassrockhounds.com](http://www.wiregrassrockhounds.com)

**March 2012**



## Words from...

### The President

We're approaching the final countdown for April's Gem & Mineral Show. Expect a busy meeting this month as we work out the remaining details. Among other things, we'll be distributing the flyers and yard signs for the folks who have agreed to spread them throughout their community. Also, if you've agreed to provide door prizes for the show, please bring the items to the **meeting on Sunday, March 25**, or at a minimum, bring a list of what you'll be contributing. See you on the 25<sup>th</sup>.      JoAn

## Announcements

**Arts Festival** – Piney Woods Arts Festival will be held on the campus of Enterprise State Community College in Enterprise on Saturday, March 24. There are always beautiful arts and crafts available for purchase—including jewelry made by DG&MC members, Diane Rodenhizer and Anne Trice. If you are in the area, be sure to check it out.

**Workshop** – JoAn Lambert will be leading a workshop on how to make a “key tail” at 1:00 PM on Saturday, March 31. Folks interested in participating should meet at the fellowship hall and bring a skein of metallic cord (e.g., Darico Metallic Cord or something similar) which can be purchased at Michael’s, Hobby Lobby, etc. JoAn will provide the beads and other supplies.

## Upcoming Shows

March 2 – 4	Suncoast Gem & Mineral Society	St. Petersburg, FL
March 16	Lakewood Rock Hounds	Buchanan, TN
March 16 – 18	Rome Georgia Mineral Society (ROGAMS)	Rome, GA
April 21 – 22	<b>Dothan Gem &amp; Mineral Show</b>	<b>Dothan, AL</b>
April 28 – 29	Memphis Mineral, Fossil, Jewelry Show	Memphis, TN

Source: [www.amfed.org/sfms/](http://www.amfed.org/sfms/)

# **Meeting Minutes – February 2012 – by Secretary**

The meeting was called to order by club President, JoAn Lambert, at 2:10 PM. She wished our February members Happy Birthday. We had 22 members and 2 guests in attendance. Chris Wisham's mother is moving to Ozark and she attended the meeting with him. Arnie Lambert brought a guest, Gary Shirah. Gary had gone on a dig in the Carolinas and had a blast. He didn't realize we had areas like that around here, but now that he does we hope to have him along on our next dig.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** The club received two e-mails from people who are interested in selling cut gems, fossils and gemstone cutting equipment. JoAn circulated pictures and contact information to the club members.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Minutes from our January meeting were unanimously approved without changes. Diane Rodenhizer presented a treasury report and Joan Blackwell gave an update on publicity for the April Gem & Mineral show.

**NEW BUSINESS:** JoAn gave kudos about the changes to our website. It has been spiffed up a bit and a new page added where our Learning Series is available for download. There was much discussion about the upcoming show. Our show chair Arnie said vendors were already signing up and it looks like we will have a full house. The publicity committee has been extremely busy getting the word out. There will be everything from electronic billboards to print ads on the sides of Dothan buses. The show has already been picked up by over a dozen websites in Alabama, Georgia and Florida that announce local events. Jeff DeRoche had our old signs redone and has ordered new ones to be used outside of the Dothan area. JoAn has been collecting items for the door prizes and silent auctions. **IF YOU ARE DONATING ITEMS FOR DOOR PRIZES OR SILENT AUCTIONS, PLEASE BRING ITEMS OR A LIST OF ITEMS TO THE MARCH MEETING.**

**SHOW & TELL:** Arnie gave his daughter, Lory Hodges, a cabochon class and it appears helping her has reinvigorated his capping also. He started off our Show and Tell with a tray of cabs he had recently made, including a few he had done a nice job of wirewrapping. Lory brought the crazy lace cab she made with Arnie's help. JoAn brought a Victoria stone and gave us a brief history on them. Joan brought a map of Bibb County she used for the February Learning Series article. Margie Cody brought two rocks that came from the actual carving of the Crazy Horse Monument. Awesome!! Joe brought an opal he got for \$1.50. After some tender love and care, it has been appraised at \$500. Not bad Joe.

Surprise, surprise, Jeff brought an emerald for Show and Tell (just kidding, we all know Jeff loves emeralds). This was not your ordinary emerald, though; it was a 486-carat (no that is not a typo) emerald he got at the Panama City show in January. It is huge and beautiful and has been both faceted and carved. Pictures do not do it justice. Gary Meredith brought several nice pieces. He showed a large slab of Brazilian agate, a really nice fish fossil, an ammonite coaster, some Indonesian amber, a 60-80 million year old dinosaur tooth, a fossilized horse tooth he got from Joe, and a pyramid made of various layers of colored minerals from Peru. The pyramid was layered in such a way that it looked like it would be a fabulous dessert.

**PROGRAM:** While no program was presented, we spent time discussing various upcoming club activities. Arnie is going to present an after school special on gems and minerals for the Science Club at Dauphin Jr. High School in Enterprise. He is also going to be teaching a group of us how to cut cabs at his house on Saturday, March 3. Our Field Trip Chair, Ken Wilson, has laid on another Dothan/Panama City trip to the Hogg mine on March 17. He reminded everyone that we should plan to arrive at the usual place by 9:00 AM (8:00 AM our time).

JoAn volunteered to teach a class in key tail making. The class will be in our usual meeting place at 1:00 PM on Saturday, March 31. JoAn said she has everything we need except metallic cord, which can be purchased at any of the local craft shops. While we were discussing future activities, a list was circulated so club members could select size and quantity of club logo T-shirts. Bill Tharpe and I will make sure we have our T-shirts before the show in April. We will have extra logos made so anyone who missed the meeting can still get a shirt done before the show.

Bill Tharpe gave the club a collection of "How To" DVDs. JoAn and Arnie brought the DVDs to the meeting with a sign out sheet. There were DVDs on virtually every gem and mineral topic you could think of. While we were milling around and munching on the refreshments, graciously provided by Diane Rodenhizer, door prizes were given out. Door prizes went to Brooke Brown, Margie Cody, Aida Ward and Gary Shirah.

Respectfully submitted by Pat Leduc

## Learning Series: Alabama's Rocks and Minerals – The “Super Sites”

# Calhoun County

Comprising approximately 611 square miles, Calhoun County lies in the northeastern area of the state, wholly within the Appalachian Valley and Ridge physiographic section. It is bounded to the northwest by Etowah County, to the northeast by Cherokee County, to the east by Cleburne County, to the south by Talladega County, and to the west by St. Clair County.

It is near the contact line that divides the sedimentary rocks to the north and the metamorphic and igneous rocks to the south. The area is characterized by open meadows bounded by mountainous ridges. Talladega National Forest in the eastern part of the county is home to several acres of mountain longleaf pine forest.

Calhoun County's rich ore deposits made it a leader in textile and iron ore production during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By the 1920s, Anniston—the county's largest city—had 3 iron foundries, making it the world's largest producer of cast-iron pipe.



Today, Calhoun County is home to the Anniston Museum of Natural History and the nearby Berman Museum of World History which boasts 8,000 artifacts. In Jacksonville, you'll find the Dr. J. C. Francis Medical Museum and Apothecary housed in the doctor's circa-1850 Greek Revival office. It features exhibits of medical and pharmaceutical tools from the mid-nineteenth century.

### Super Site Selection Criteria

Calhoun County was selected as a Super Site for this series on the basis of information reported in *Rocks and Minerals of Alabama – A Guide for Alabama Rockhounds (Circular 38, 1966)*. The guide identified two minerals—galena and sphalerite—as being prominent in an old lead mine in a community called Angel Station, located approximately 3 miles west of Jacksonville, just off Hwy 204.

### Featured Rocks and Minerals

**Galena** – (PbS) - the chief ore of lead.

The name “galena” is derived from the Greek “galena,” meaning *lead ore*. It is a lead sulfide mineral and often contains silver.

A member of the isometric crystal system, galena is an opaque mineral with a dull, metallic luster. Though a soft specimen (Mohs – 2.5), it is also brittle with perfect cleavage and sub-conchoidal fracture. Galena is lead-grey in both color and streak and it doesn't fluoresce in UV light. Because it contains lead, those collecting the specimen should avoid inhaling dust when breaking it, refrain from licking samples and always wash hands after handling it.



It is found in ore veins with sphalerite, pyrite, chalcopyrite, tennantite-tetrahedrite, etc. and in skarns, as well as in sedimentary rocks where it may replace carbonate beds or be deposited in pore spaces. The crystals are bright when fresh but often tarnish after exposure to air.

In Alabama it occurs most frequently in small quartz veins in metamorphic rocks and as space fillings in limestone and dolomite rocks. Galena crystals occur as cubes or masses of cubic crystals embedded on the country rock, however, Alabama galena is predominantly all massive vein type.

Lead has numerous uses. It is the principal ingredient in many paints, and plumbing and electrical supplies. It is also used in making glass and is instrumental in the protective shields used to guard against exposure to radioactivity.

**Sphalerite** – (ZnS) – zinc sulfide, the major ore of zinc. Sometimes called “zincblende” or “blackjack”.

The name “sphalerite” is derived from the Greek “sphaleros,” meaning *treacherous*; an allusion to the ease with which dark varieties were mistaken for galena, but yielded no lead.

A member of the isometric crystal system, sphalerite is a transparent to translucent mineral with a resinous, adamantine luster. It is a moderately soft specimen (Mohs – 3.5 – 4.0) with a brittle tenacity, perfect cleavage and conchoidal fracture. Sphalerite is available in a wide range of colors. This sometimes makes it difficult to identify on the basis of color alone. When pure—with little or no iron—it forms clear to pale yellow crystals and is known as cleiophane. Orange to red shades are known as ruby blende, but as iron content increases it forms the dark, opaque metallic crystals known as marmatite. It is also found in light blue and green. During a streak test, it smells of sulfur and appears pale yellow to brown.



Sphalerite is commonly associated with other sulfide minerals—particularly galena—but also with chalcopyrite, pyrite, marcasite, magnetite, calcite and dolomite. It occurs chiefly in veins and irregular replacement deposits of limestone, but can be found in veins in igneous rocks and in contact metamorphic deposits.

Because sphalerite is a chief source of zinc, it is used mainly for metallurgy. Its zinc is used to coat metals to resist corrosion or can be used to make metal blends, e.g., for making copper, lead and silver. The zinc from sphalerite is also extracted for use in dietary supplements, batteries and rust-proofing materials.

### **Additional Minerals of Calhoun County**

In addition to galena and sphalerite, the [www.mindat.org](http://www.mindat.org) website currently lists the presence of 29 other mineral specimens in Calhoun County. They include: barite, bauxite, beraunite, cacoxenite, calcite, chalcopyrite, fluorite, argentiferous galena, gibbsite, goethite, hematite, kaolinite, kidwellite, limonite, lithiophorite, magnetite, manganite, marble, niter, nitratine, pyrite, pyrolusite, quartz (var: chert, rock crystal), rockbridgeite, smithsonite, strengite, “wad” and wavellite.

Over 160 mines are on record in Calhoun County; many associated with the aluminum industry. Most sites are clustered in and around Jacksonville in the northeast part of the county, and near Anniston which is toward the southern edge.

#### **Sources:**

- <http://www.micromountersofnewengland.org/pdfs/Min-Loc1.pdf>
- <http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-1273>
- <http://www.mindat.org/loc-65481.html>
- <http://www.mindat.org/locdetailed-65481.html>
- <http://www.mindat.org/lsearch.php?from=nsearch&loc=alabama>
- [http://www.ehow.com/about\\_5044698\\_important-uses-sphalerite.html](http://www.ehow.com/about_5044698_important-uses-sphalerite.html)

# Club Meeting – February 2012

We got right down to business at the February meeting...lots to cover with reports from the various show committees. So far, everything seems to be on track for a good turnout of vendors and, hopefully, customers. Show & Tell was mostly a display of craftsmanship and handiwork.



# Cabochon Class – March 2012

The cabochon class was all about the hands...holding them steady while turning the dopping stick and keeping them out of the reach of spinning saw blades and grinding wheels.



Inclement weather made it a great day to be inside. After a few hours of fun and fellowship, the five students each left with a finished piece or two...and all their fingers.



# Who What Where When Why How

## March Birthdays

**MAR 6 Susan Bright**  
**MAR 7 Jeff DeRoche**  
**MAR 17 Mary S. Watts**  
**MAR 19 Grady Dunn**  
**George White**  
**Lisa Wisham**  
**MAR 23 JoAn Lambert**  
**MAR ?? Ben Ferguson**

## Random Rock Facts

Beryl contains the chemical element *beryllium*.

Beryllium is strong, nonmagnetic, has a high melting point and doesn't expand much when heated. These properties account for its many aerospace applications like rocket nozzles and communication satellites.

Though beryllium tastes sweet, it is toxic. Chronic exposure to beryllium (typically through inhalation) can lead to a life-threatening allergic disease called berylliosis.

Aquamarine, the birthstone for March, is a variety of beryl.

Source: [www.ehow.com/about\\_5068475\\_beryl.html](http://www.ehow.com/about_5068475_beryl.html)

## Meeting Information

**Time:** 2:00 PM  
**Date:** Fourth Sunday of each month (except June, July and August)  
**Place:** Fellowship Hall – Tabernacle United Methodist Church  
4329 S. Brannon Stand Road  
(intersection of Brannon Stand Road and Hwy 52)  
Dothan, AL

**Website:** [www.wiregrassrockhounds.com](http://www.wiregrassrockhounds.com)

## Objectives

To stimulate interest in lapidary, earth science and, when necessary, other related fields.  
  
To sponsor an educational program within the membership to increase the knowledge of its members in the properties, identifications and evaluations of rocks, minerals, fossils and other related subjects.  
  
To cooperate and aid in the solution of its members' problems encountered in the Club's objectives.  
  
To cooperate with other mineralogical and geological clubs and societies.  
  
To arrange and conduct field trips to facilitate the collection of minerals.

To provide opportunity for exchange and exhibition of specimens and materials.  
  
To conduct its affairs without profit and to refrain from using its assets for pecuniary benefit of any individual or group.

## Classified Ads

**Looking for an item to round out your rock collection?**

**Got a specimen, tool or handicraft for sale or trade?**

**Submit the pertinent details to me by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month and your inclinations will be made known to the membership in the next bulletin.**

**N. J. Blackwell**  
28 Lakeview Trail, Apt. C  
Daleville, AL 36322  
Phone: 334-503-0308  
Email: [Tsavorite7@aol.com](mailto:Tsavorite7@aol.com)

## Officers

**President – JoAn Lambert**  
334-792-7116

**Vice President – Jeff DeRoche**  
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**Secretary/Webmaster – Pat LeDuc**  
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**Membership Chair – Diane Rodenhizer**  
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**Show Chair – Arnie Lambert**  
334-792-7116

**Field Trips Chair – Ken Wilson**  
850-547-9577

**Hospitality Chair – Meredith Capshaw**  
334-684-9448

**Club Hostess – Laural Meints**  
334-723-2695

## Annual Dues

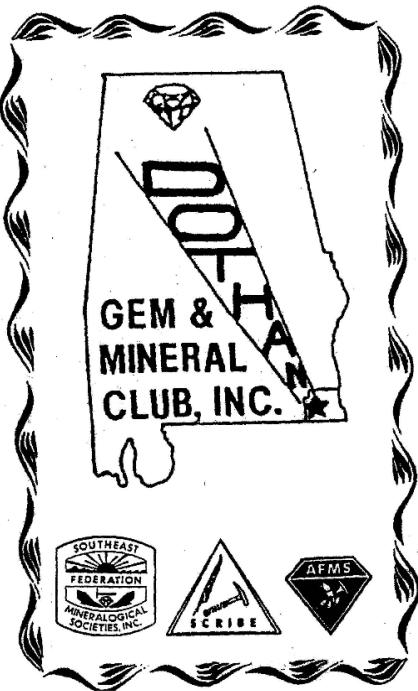
Single \$15  
Family \$20

## Refreshments

**MAR – Lory Hodges & Laural Meints**

**APR – No meeting due to show**

**MAY – Joe & Margie Cody**



## Where you might hear...

**Skarn** – a coarse-grained *metamorphic rock* formed by the contact metamorphism of *carbonate rocks*. Skarn typically contains garnet, pyroxene, epidote, and wollastonite.

**Metamorphic Rock** – a rock that has changed from one form of rock to another as a result of heat, pressure, or some other agent—but without passing through a liquid phase.

**Carbonate Rock** – a *sedimentary rock* formed by the precipitation of organic or inorganic carbon from an aqueous solution of carbonates of calcium, magnesium, or iron. Limestone is a carbonate rock.

**Sedimentary Rock** – rock that has formed through the deposition and solidification of sediment, especially sediment transported by water (rivers, lakes, and oceans), ice (glaciers), and wind.

Source: <http://dictionary.reference.com/>

**Member of**  
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**American Federation of Mineralogical Societies**

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