
The Rockhound's Bark

The Nova Scotia Mineral and Gem Society Newsletter

February 2005



ABOUT THE SOCIETY

Meetings are held the last Saturday of each month, September-November and January-May, 7:30 - 10:00 p.m. in the auditorium (Lower Level) of the N.S. Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer St., Halifax. Dues are \$20/year, payable in January of each year.

2004-2005 EXECUTIVE

President:	Ronnie Van Dommelen
Vice President:	Fred Walsh
Secretary:	vacant
Treasurer:	Terry Collett
Bark Editor:	Ken McKenzie
Librarian:	Doug Bowes

SOCIETY'S MAILING ADDRESS

The Nova Scotia Mineral and Gem Society
c/o NS Museum of Natural History
1747 Summer Street, Halifax, N.S., B3H 3A6

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE

March 16, 2005.

NEXT MEETING

By Ronnie Van Dommelen

This month there will be a small auction of material that was donated to the club by a previous member. This material was on display at the January meeting and included labradorite rough, an excellent plant fossil, a rock tumbler, and much more.

The program this month will be on a discussion of reflecting goniometers by Ronnie Van Dommelen. This tool, designed to measure angles between crystal faces, is quite useful to mineral collectors. It can be used to identify the forms present on a crystal and can even be used to identify minerals. Professional mineralogists used them extensively in the last century before the development of electron microprobes and X-ray diffraction techniques were developed. However, it can still be useful to the collector and can be made at home. The operation of a goniometer will be presented and several different home-made versions will be shown.

MINERAL OF THE MONTH

By Ronnie Van Dommelen

The mineral of the month for February is gypsum. This is an important mineral for Nova Scotia. It is found in a wide variety of colours and habits.

- 1) What mineral is most commonly found with gypsum from the deposits in Nova Scotia?
- 2) Gypsum can be fluorescent. (T/F)
- 3) Gypsum is mined for the production of what major home building material?

- 4) Colourless, transparent gypsum is called _____.
- 5) Aggregates of parallel fibrous gypsum is called _____.
- 6) (Hard or soft) best describes gypsum.
- 7) Some minerals are flexible, and others are elastic (i.e. flexible and return to their original shape). Which term describes gypsum (flexible, elastic, or neither).
- 8) The Nova Scotia deposits of gypsum fall into which basic rock type?
- 9) The Cave of Swords in Naica, Mexico is filled with giant gypsum crystals (T/F).
- 10) Gypsum crystals are used in digital watches due to their piezoelectric properties (T/F).

ANSWERS TO PAST QUIZZES

October - Quartz

- 1) amethyst, 2) titanium, 3) trigonal, 4) T, 5) softer, 6) Japan, 7) perpendicular, 8) F, 9) all, 10) T

November - Calcite

- 1) aragonite (orthorhombic), vaterite (hexagonal), 2) T, 3) any two of gaspeite ($\{Ni, Mg, Fe\}CO_3$), magnesite ($MgCO_3$), otavite ($CdCO_3$), rhodochrosite ($MnCO_3$), siderite ($FeCO_3$), smithsonite ($ZnCO_3$), sphaerocobaltite ($CoCO_3$), 4) all, 5) acid, 6) Hauy, 7) F, 8) two, talc and gypsum, 9) poker chip and dog's tooth, 10) double refraction

January - Barite, Celestite, and Anglesite

- 1) barite, 2) anglesite, 3) F, 4) barium, strontium, and lead 5) Walton, 6) Madagascar, 7) all, 8) celestite, 9) T, 10) F

FIELD TRIP!

A field trip in February is a first for the NSGMS, but that is exactly what is happening. Terry Collett is hosting an open house on Saturday February 26 (club meeting day). The times are from 12 to 6 PM, but it would be advised to leave yourself plenty of viewing time. Refreshments will be served.

Terry's collection, as it now stands, is the result of a decade of collecting. Its breadth and quality are very impressive and it is, without a doubt, breathtaking when seen for the first time.

Terry lives at 26 Gourok Ave. From Micmac Mall, proceed onto Main Street. Turn left at the car dealership onto Caledonia Road and drive past the 3-way stop. Gourok is the next left. If you need further information, Terry's phone number is 434-5220.

JANUARY MEETING

by Fred Walsh

Fifteen members and guests were present. Mail was received from Infonex, Amirault Photography, Calgary Rock & Lapadary Club, and GMFC.

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 PM. There was no old business. Dot Roberts moved acceptance of the minutes of the last meeting, seconded by Terry.

New business

- The museum is putting in a LCD projector within the next few months.
- Locker top must be cleaned off.
- Gordon Stewart wants to get the answers in the next Bark.
- Next month's mineral is gypsum.
- Three great pieces will be available for auction next month.
- Mid-winter field trip to Terry's on Saturday February 26th between 12.00-6.00 PM; a great way to get ready for that night's meeting.

Motion to adjourn meeting was made by Imelda O'Toole and seconded by William.

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

By Ken McKenzie

Thanks go to Ronnie for providing most of the content for this month's Bark.