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# The Rockhound's Bark

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The Nova Scotia Mineral and Gem Society Newsletter

May 2008



## 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.

## 2008 EXECUTIVE

<b>President:</b>	<b>William Blinn</b>
<b>Vice President:</b>	<b>Fred Walsh</b>
<b>Secretary:</b>	<b>Fred Walsh</b>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	<b>Terry Collett</b>
<b>Bark Editor:</b>	<b>Ken McKenzie</b>
<b>Librarian:</b>	<b>?</b>

## 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

September 20, 2008.

## DISPLAY AND OPEN HOUSE

**By Ken McKenzie**

The N.S. Mineral and Gem Society will be having an 'open house'-style display the N.S. Museum of Natural History, Saturday, May 24, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Drop by and bring your friends who have been wondering what we do.

## NEXT MEETING

**By Ken McKenzie**

May 31 is our next scheduled meeting night. No program information is available at this time.

## MINUTES OF THE MARCH MEETING

**By Fred Walsh**

Meeting called to order at 7:30 p.m. 17 members and guests were present.

### Old Business

Terry has nothing on the Parrsboro trip.

Membership cards to be handed out and has insurance statement on back of card. E-mail to be sent to Bill Blinn if going on field trip to cover insurance.

Ken McKenzie has website links fixed.

### New Business

Bill Blinn will start as President. Terry made motion, Ron seconded all approved.

Terry, Bill and Herb went through photos, will scan and put on CD.

Ken mentioned 50th anniversary of Gem and Mineral Society. Ken and Bill will try together on photos.

Herb has 12 canisters of slides. No descriptions. Will go through.

Victor got a hold of Brenda from the NS Museum and got time and date for Show and

Tell, Saturday May 24, 10:00-4:00. Set up will be at 8:30, takedown 6:30. We will have 6 tables and a case.

Martin will bring in display. Victor will do lapidary. Fred and Bill will be there. Advertisements will be sent out.

John asked about getting the book Minerals of North America. Terry wants to know about buying books. Terry made a motion to get books, seconded by John – all agreed. Gilles will order books.

Ken said he will do the April presentation, Geology of North West U.S.A. and talked about Sackville Business Park site for mineral collecting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30.

## MINUTES OF THE APRIL MEETING

### By Fred Walsh

Meeting called to order at 7:50 p.m. 12 members and guests were present.

### Old Business

Talked about May 24, 2008 Show and Tell. Bill will be there, Victor will do Lapidary, Fred will bring fossils. All are welcome. Bill will do advertising.

Terry said there will be no field trip to Tyson's shop.

Herb talked about the slides he picked out. There was talk about whether the photo guild would want Harry Crossman's slides.

Terry suggested we defer doing anything about the photos until the fall. Seconded by Gilles all approved.

Gilles ordered a book from Germany.

A reminder, to call Bill if you plan on going out on a field trip, to be covered by insurance.

Bill talked about contacting Rocky Lake Quarry and Kearney Lake Quarry. He has not received a response as of yet.

Gilles talked about getting sign made up for cars to let people know who we are.

No other old business.

### New Business

There was talk about having at the January meeting the best specimen of the year award. All were to think about it and get back by next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

## RECOGNITION FOR GORDON STEWART

### By Bill Blinn

A plaque was presented to Gordon Stewart in recognition of his work in preserving the history of the NS Mineral & Gem Society. After the presentation coffee and cake was served.

Thanks to Gordon's work the history of the society will be preserved forever. Thank you Gordon.



## **OF ROCKS, ROCKHOUNDS AND LAPIDARIES – A Historical Sketch Of The Nova Scotia Mineral And Gem Society**

### **Part 3**

**by Gordon K. Stewart**

#### **Regular Meetings And Programmatic Interests**

Throughout its history regular meetings of the Society have usually been held monthly except in July and August and have served not only to deal with any ongoing business but also often as opportunities to hear from a special speaker or to see a slide show or film on some topic related to geology. No record remains of most such presentations but their diversity is evident from references to them and sometimes brief accounts of them in the "Bark" and they have served not only their educational purposes but to sustain the interest of members of the Society who were not involved in the lapidary focus which was that of a majority of others.

Speakers at Society meetings have included members of University Geology Departments, staff members from the Museum, persons from the Mining and Petroleum Industries and members of the Society itself. For many years, for example, Harry Crosman, a long standing member of the Society who frequented more distant shows in the United States, could be depended upon to make an interesting presentation even on short notice, and there seem always to have been other members with similar gifts as, of course, there still are.

#### **Field Trips**

The Society from its beginning and during its most active years has had a major interest in the finding of lapidary materials and their crafting into items for display and sometimes for sale and it is with these purposes in mind that most of the Society's field trips have been organized.

The earliest field trip planned by the Society took place on June 6, 1959 when a group visited Scots Bay and at the end of the next year Clifford Hood reported, "...we had two successful field trips to Digby Neck although not highly attended due to distance, and one not quite so successful at Scott's Bay" while, he added, "The boys and I from Yarmouth made five extra trips and on all but two met several members each time". Such a pattern of activity backed by various levels of organization, seems to have been quite usual and, writing in 1979, Ted Harrington recalled that, "For several years, two major trips were organized each year, one over the July first weekend at Scots Bay and the other over Labour Day weekend at Sandy Cove." In the early years, as he remembered them, some twenty or more members usually took part in the trips although by 1976 these numbers had dropped to "about a dozen" for each event and in 1976, "...the Chairman of The Field Trip Committee tried a new idea, a change of locations, and scheduled four trips to Noel Shore, Londonderry, Copper Lake and Ross Creek."

The response to that initiative was said to be disappointing but similar trips continued to be organized and have taken place quite successfully. In the fall of 1979 Hector Gaudet led a group of 25 students from Bedford High School and their geology teacher on a trip to the Cheverie Shore and in 1980 other trips under the Society's sponsorship followed. In that year groups went to Blomidon, to Cheverie, along the Noel Shore, to the James River area and to Copper Lake. In 1981 Bob Grantham led a group of about 21 to Ross Creek after a series of stops along the way while in succeeding years further trips were undertaken led by a variety of Society members and the pattern still continues, though usually with smaller numbers involved. Destinations have usually been within quite easy range of Halifax by car but some have been as far away as Boylston or the Parrsboro area or the now closed tin mine at East Kemptville or, on one occasion, to tour the salt mine at Pugwash, or, on numerous

occasions, to Amethyst Cove whether going by boat or overland and "down the ropes".

### Workshops

Especially in the early years of the Society field trips were often associated with the training of so-called "Junior" members of the group and seem to have served not only to arouse their interest but also as occasions for their instruction in recognizing the materials they sought for craft purposes. In the same way, workshops were arranged at least as early as 1979 and served as training opportunities for novices seeking to learn the lapidary skills of many older members.

In the September/October 1979 issue of *The Bark* the Society announced, "We now have workspace available at the Oxford Community School (corner of North & Oxford Sts.), Art Room on Wednesday nights. The course will be for beginners; for a start we have (2) machines - the Lortone 6" combi-unit and a Timber (1) Star Diamond Unit lent by the President for the duration of the course. Instructors so far are: Derrick Adams, Ken Hamilton and Paul Springer. Any additional help is most welcome!!!" Response to that announcement was immediate. Eight students appeared on the first night and by the month's end it was reported as "fully booked" while over in Dartmouth a similar "basic lapidary course" was being offered by the Continuing Education Department of the City of Dartmouth and there it was said, "... facilities have a full range of professional (heavy-duty) equipment with excellent instructors (our own Bob Miller is one of them)".

By the 1980's lapidary workshops had become a major feature of the Society's life and by 1986 were taking place regularly at the Museum with the Society providing all the equipment and workshop schedules were being published in *The Bark*. While the details are difficult to follow they certainly continued into the 90's and only declined as the interests of members became more diverse and participants became fewer. In the end, however, when the needed lapidary equipment fell into disuse and was found difficult to store

it was dispersed by auction to interested members, in effect closing the era of the Society's most continued vitality and laying a groundwork for a crisis of identity that overtook the group at the end of the Millennium.

### Shows

From its very beginning field trips, and, until the 1990's, lapidary workshops, have made up a large part of the activities of the Society but its point of contact and interaction with the world at large has mostly been through its involvement in public shows, some of them organized by the group itself and others in which it has participated simply as one more exhibiting body.

By 1960 a practice had already been established of combining the Society's Annual Meeting with some form of show and Clifford Hood, writing as President at the end of that year, referred to his plans for 1961 as including "the annual meeting and Exhibition which will be held in April". By the 1970's displays had become a regular feature of the Society's life but no longer necessarily linked to Annual Meetings and, describing the Society in May of 1978, Paul Springer, then Vice President, wrote, "Every other year (next event - 1979), usually in May or June, we have an exhibition of work done by our members here at the Nova Scotia Museum, together with other societies." Two shows, however, stand out in the story as quite spectacular both in their own right and as in many ways representing the high point of the public activity of the Society up to the present time. One was held in 1978 and the other in 1982, both of them years in which the regular "Museum Show" was not scheduled.

The larger of the two shows was certainly the International Earth Science Exhibition to which reference has already been made and which took place at Saint Mary's University in 1978 from Thursday, August 10" to Sunday, August 13". It was sponsored by the Nova Scotia Mineral And Gem Society but organized commercially by Denman Exhibitions Limited with the endorsement of the Nova Scotia Departments of Tourism and of Mines as well as

the Halifax Tourist and Convention Bureau and Saint Mary's University and had the Honourable Clarence L. Gosse, Lieutenant Governor of the Province, as its Honorary President.

Featured at the Exhibition were numerous dealers from Canada and the United States and the displays included exotic minerals and fossils and even a small moon rock complete with its own special guard. There were lapidary demonstrations, lectures and slide shows and visitors were promised "...entertainment...at a nominal cost on Thursday to Saturday evenings in the Huskies Arena" and for those wishing to go further afield there were trips organized to other locations of special geological interest.

The second of the two most spectacular shows took place four years later when, after much planning and negotiation, and perhaps buoyed up by the success of the International Exhibition four years earlier, the Society acted as host to the Convention and Show of the Gem And Mineral Federation Of Canada held in the Dartmouth High School from Thursday, July 1" to Sunday, July 4" 1982. This time also a full though smaller programme of field trips, talks, demonstrations and displays was arranged under the chairmanship of Mr. Ken Hamilton, the President of the local Society and, until just before the show, also Editor of the "Bark". Some 17 dealers participated as well as amateur collectors and lapidaries and arrangements for the event involved not only rental of the "old gym", the cafeteria and two classrooms at the School but the provision of 100 display tables and the distribution of over 4000 fliers promoting it. In addition space was reserved at the Museum for the Annual Meetings of The Gem And Mineral Federation and meetings of its Directors. Meanwhile the Annual Meeting of the local Society, and the Annual Dinner with which it had come to be linked, was also arranged to take place at the Holiday Inn on Wyse Road on Saturday, June 26", just four days before the opening of the Convention and Show. Tickets for the Dinner were \$8.00 each.

Unfortunately, although the various presentations at the Convention and Show appear

to have been of a high order, public response was disappointing and despite a grant totalling some \$1500 from the Nova Scotia Department of Culture, Recreation And Fitness the event incurred a net loss of \$1,405.03 which, in accordance with agreements negotiated earlier, was shared between the local Society and the Gem And Mineral Federation, an outcome which cost the local Society just over \$700 and must inevitably have dampened enthusiasm for further undertakings on the same scale. Involvement in displays has, however, continued and after the Museum withdrew the next year from its practice of hosting a more local but more diverse annual "Societies' Show" in which the local Mineral And Gem Society had usually participated, the Club arranged for a number of years to participate as a group in the "Rockbound Roundup" held annually in Parrsboro since it was first organized by Eldon George about 1965. Most frequently, however, the Club has chosen instead to stage its own shows, usually on a much smaller scale and often in commercial Malls though also sometimes in space provided at the Museum. Meanwhile individual members have visited ever more distant shows and sales, sometimes returning with specimens which are then traded with other members at home.

### **The Memorial Library**

After the death of Ted Harrington in 1979 some 21 books of geological interest from his library were donated to the Society by his family. These became the core of a larger collection established in the following year as "The E. F. Harrington Memorial Library" and ever since have been made available for borrowing by Society Members. At present the collection comprises well over one hundred books as well as a number of periodicals and videotapes and is now known as "The Ted Harrington and Andrew Brock Memorial Library", thus adding a recognition of the contributions of Andrew Brock, an enthusiastic newer member of the Society who served as Librarian since 2000 and also as editor of the "Bark" from January 2002 until his untimely death from cancer in 2003.