

April 2009



# The Rockhound's Bark

## April News

### 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.

### 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

### MEMBERSHIP FEES

Membership fees were due in January. Please bring application form to a meeting or mail it to Terry along with \$20. We would like to be sure we have your most current information.

Bill Blinn will give a presentation on Websites and Displaying your Collection at the April meeting.

Calling all Junior Rockhounds - Start writing your stories . The Kids Section of the Bark will debut in the May issue.

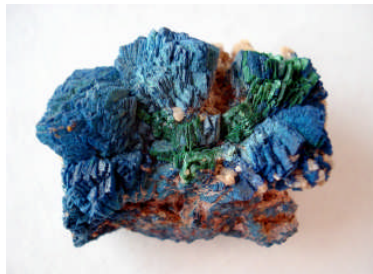
Also, if anyone has pictures of specimens or sites that you would like to share, please forward them to me in jpeg format and I will put them in the Bark for other members to enjoy. Also pass on any good websites you find and we will list those in the newsletter.

## THUMBNAIL COLLECTORS

Any mineral collector who enjoys Thumbnail sized specimens may be interested in a new collectors internet group devoted to TNs .

We have organized a group and established a website oriented towards the education, buying, selling and trading of just TNs.

There are no fees or dues, just an interest in collecting Thumbnails and sharing of that interest with other members all over the world.



Azurite, 33mm across  
Sir Dominic Mine, South Australia  
Steve Sorrell specimen and photo



For more information, see our website at:  
<http://thumbnails.crocoite.com>

or contact: Larry Rush at  
[larryrush@att.net](mailto:larryrush@att.net)

The International Thumbnail  
Mineral Collectors Association

## Is It Jasper? Is It Agate? Do You Know?

Author unknown



Montana Moss Agate



A pebble of the mineral Jasper



Picture Jasper found near Cape Blomidon available from [robsrockshop.com](http://robsrockshop.com)

Jasper and agate are the rocks most often dealt with by the rockhound and hobbyist in the pursuit of their goals as lapidarists and collectors.

Do you really understand the difference between the two types?

Confusion often arises in trying to describe a specimen as jasper or agate. An attempt is made to clear up this confusion here and now!

To begin: jasper and agate are composed of extremely interlocking quartz crystals called cryptocrystalline quartz. As such, they are both members of the fine-grained quartz family commonly referred to as chalcedony.

Chalcedony occurs throughout the world in beds, bands, nodules, geodes, botryoidal masses as a replacement of fossils, wood tissue or other minerals, and as a cementing material. It is deposited from silica-rich waters often carrying other mineral impurities.

It is the presence of these impurities which stain the micro-quartz grains to produce the wide variety of color patterns, banding effect and inclusions that differentiate the basic gem forms of cryptocrystalline quartz...jasper and agate...from ordinary drab chalcedony.

Now, for the difference between the two.

In general, agate is a translucent form of chalcedony in which the coloration takes the form of regular bands, rings, clouds and wispy inclusions or distinct groups. Agate, which contains concentric bands, is referred to as fortification agate.

Moss agate contains delicate, wispy or lacy inclusions of colored minerals - sometimes the green mineral chlorite, other times the black mineral pyrolusite, a manganese oxide, which penetrated cracks in the silica gel matrix prior to hardening. Now they remain as fine picture-like images.

Agate is often named after the geographic area where it is found, and with a descriptive adjective attached i.e., Friday Ranch Plume Agate.

Jasper, on the other hand can be somewhat translucent, but is most often opaque. The coloration of jasper is usually much darker than that of agate and is totally random with respect to distribution and pattern. Finely divided hematite gives the reddish color to jaspers, and another iron mineral, goethite, is responsible for the yellows and browns. Chlorite and nickel minerals contribute to the green colorations.

Like agate, jasper comes in many colors and displays an infinite variety of material for cabochons, scenic "pictures" to be framed and other functional or decorative purposes.

They are truly the "bread and butter" gemstones of our hobby.

Source: GEM CUTTER NEWS 9/10-92;  
Via: STRATA GEM 9-2006  
(Changes made for clarification.  
Editor THE MOUNTAIN GEM)

## THE PAPER WORK

SUBMITTED BY JOHN LOWRY

With another collecting season about to begin, I would like to pass on an important aspect of field collecting.

As the saying goes "The job's not done until the paper work is finished".

You might have collected the most incredible mineral sample but without completing the "paper work" it is just another geological sample with very little monetary or collection value.

So what information should we be recording to increase the values of our mineral samples?

At a minimum, we should be recording the location that we found the sample and the date. Any additional information would add to the value/desirability of the sample. [i.e. name of person collecting, more specific location information i.e. Mine Level, Pocket Name].

As collecting localities are found or closed, this information could be useful in tracing the history of the mineral deposit. Also, there are some collectors that specialize in minerals from a specific geographical area and others that specialize in a particular mineral species.

If you have taken the time and effort to record your collection information, you are adding "provenance" to your mineral sample. Should you choose to sell or trade your mineral specimens, this record will pass to the new owner.

Ok, now you recognize the importance of recording the information. How should you do it?

If you are youthful, perhaps you can mentally store all the data. However as the light from the birthday candles gets brighter, the capacity to remember will slowly fade. Therefore, it is an accepted practice to physically record your information. Most collectors create a specimen label to accompany the sample. Others have computer programs that will track their collection efforts. Some use digital pictures to supplement their records. The point is to create a system that works for you.

Finally, there must be some way to link the mineral sample with your information label. Perhaps you had a flat of specimens sitting on the kitchen table while you were showing them to your family. Catastrophe strikes and samples and labels succumb to the effects of gravity. How do you remember what label is paired with a particular sample?

There should be some sort of identification attached to your mineral sample. Years ago, collectors would apply white paint to an area of the sample and then write the information in this area.

The current principle is that you should not make any irreversible markings/attachments to a mineral sample. Adhesive tape, Mylar film and hot melt glue have been used to attach small labels in an inconspicuous area of the sample. Depending on the size of the sample, "Mineral Tack" or hot melt glue can be used to attach the sample to a display stand. A specimen label or identification label can then be attached to the display stand.

Have a safe and successful collecting season.

## MINUTES OF MARCH MEETING

By Arlene Driscoll

### Events

**May 2-Field Trip**  
**Bill Harrington**

**June 20-Field Trip**  
**Ross Creek**  
**12:30PM**  
**Bill Blinn**

### Old Business:

Terry and Bill have set up a new bank account for the club and are awaiting a cheque from Ron for the balance from the old account so the transfer can be completed.

The May 9th mineral, agate, fossil show at the museum has been postponed until the fall. Victor will keep us informed about a new date.

Bill Harrington reported that the first weekend in May would be a good time for the trip to Kennetcook/Cheverie.

Bill will do the Ross Creek trip on June 20. Meet at 12:30 at Ross Creek.

Bill had hats available for members to purchase and he informed the members that Dcosta Marketing also would provide crests for jackets, etc for a cost of \$5 each. Just show your membership card to them to get the crest at this price.

The GMFC also has crests, etc for sale.

The club received a letter from the Joggins Fossil Institute offering to do a presentation on fossils or host a meeting. Bill will see about a tour of the site and a meeting in the near future.

Members had a number of suggestions for future meetings:

- David Susuki - Geological Survey of Nova Scotia
  - Kids night
  - Wire Wrapping
  - Folklore of rocks & gems
- Bring more ideas at the next meeting.

Our website has been out of service. Ken McKenzie has purchased a domain name for the club and is working on restoring the site. He will keep us advised as to progress.

Raffle items have been provided by Bill MacDonald and Bill Harrington.

Tom Spence of TLS Gemworks did a presentation on lapidary.

## TIPS & TRICKS

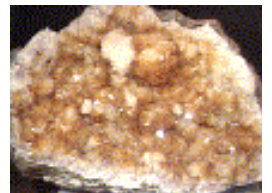
### A hint on Lapping Geodes.

When you are trying to polish a geode on a vibrating lap, it is difficult to keep the grit out of the center of the geode when it is hollow and filled with crystals. One suggestion is to fill the center with Knox gelatin, a product you can buy at most grocery stores. It turns to jelly when mixed with water and after a while will set good and firm. Pour it into the geode before polishing, and when you are done, just wash it out with warm water. It leaves no residue. Rockhound Ramblings, Jeffco G&M Club, Avada, Co. 2007.

### Is it citrine, or topaz?

Clean the stone, then, using a toothpick, put a drop of water on the table of the stone. The water will form a high bubble on real topaz.

On quartz, the water flattens out. from Don Ashbury via THE BRECCIA, 2/02



### 2009 EXECUTIVE

**President:**

William Blinn

**Vice President:**

Fred Walsh

**Secretary/Bark Editor:**

Arlene Driscoll

**Treasurer:**

Terry Collett

**Librarian:**

Herb Malle