



# The Rockblast

The Kitchener-Waterloo Gem and Mineral Newsletter

September 2006

## President's Message

Hope all of you had an enjoyable summer- -it's back to school for the kids and back to the club with our Wed Sept. 6 rock meeting.

I just got back from a field trip to the Madoc area with a handful of club members. One of us (nameless) figured he knew the way to some old mines that closed in the fifties, but upon arriving, the path in had changed (it's been 50 years!). We eventually trek in through the forest, negotiate around a few large swamps (and mosquitoes), and stumble upon the mine (small pile of rubble!) in a couple of hours. We spend time there, start walking out for an hour and find ourselves back at the mine! Lucky for us we had a Boy Scout along (nameless) who got us out with one of those GPS things.

The next mine went better but the pile of rocks was small. The next day we went to old famous iron mine (Marmora) and did not get lost. It was a HOT time !?

Meeting time: Wed. Sept. 6 at 7:30 at WCAC (25 Regina St.S., Waterloo)

### Agenda

1. Come early with lots of \$ -- your \$20 membership is due. If you joined this summer you are paid up; if you joined in the spring you will be given credit for the unused part of your membership. We are trying to have Sept. - June memberships

2. Please bring your "latest rock finds" for our "show and tell". If you need any minerals identified bring those also (our experts are on deck to help you "know and tell").

3. Bring even more \$ -- you may sell, donate, buy, trade, enter our silent auction, all for your added enjoyment.

4. Got NO \$ -- come and enjoy anyway!

*-- Gary Winkler*



## Rock Quote of the Month

“Civilization exists by geologic consent, subject to change without notice.”

-- Will Durant

## On the Trail of the Mastodon

The Kitchener-Waterloo *Record* had a [long article](#) on May 27 2006 about a recent donation to **Peter Russell's** Earth Sciences Museum: two molars and a tusk from a mastodon. They were recently found in a farmhouse in Highgate.

These fossils could be part of the Highgate Mastodon, a famous fossil excavated in 1890 in southwest Ontario.

The rest of the mastodon skeleton is currently in the North Dakota Heritage Center in Bismarck, North Dakota.

For more information, go to [http://www.therecord.com/links/links\\_06053092355.html](http://www.therecord.com/links/links_06053092355.html)

## Club History Quiz

1. What was the original name of our club, back when it was formed in October 1965?
2. The first club field trip, on October 17 1965, visited what classic Ontario location?
3. Who was the first president and what is he doing now?

## Bob Sharpe Visits German Impact Crater

Club member Bob Sharpe took a trip to Germany in June. Among other things, he visited the Ries Crater in Nördlingen. Nördlingen is between the cities of Munich, Nuremberg, and Stuttgart. The crater basin is about 25 km in diameter, and is believed to be the result of a meteorite impact about 15 million years ago. It is one of the best preserved such craters.

Bob also brought back some moldavites. Moldavites are green glass found in Bohemia and Moravia; they are generally believed to be the result of the Ries impact, although some scientists think otherwise.

## Ontario Diamond Mine Opens

On June 20 an opening ceremony took place for a new diamond mine on the coast of James Bay. Ontario premier Dalton McGuinty was present for the opening of the De Beers project. According to the *Record*, "some analysts predict Canada will be the largest [diamond] producer in the world within the next 20 years." The mine is located in Attawapiskat and Kashechewan in northern Ontario.

## Mars - Meteorite Collector's Heaven?

The *New Scientist* reported on June 13 2006 that the Mars rover *Spirit* has found two iron meteorites on Mars.



One meteorite appears in the right foreground of the picture above. It was detected because of its high reflectivity compared to other rocks.

For more information, go to <http://www.newscientistspace.com/article/dn9324>

## Book Explores the Rocks of Manitoulin

For well over a century, the Manitoulin Island area has been a mecca for earth scientists from all over North America who came to study its rocks and collect its fossils. A new book by two UW earth scientists and a curator colleague explains why. Its launch, planned for Wednesday at the Gore Bay Museum in Gore Bay on Manitoulin, is timed to coincide with the start of the 2006 tourist season.

*Manitoulin Rocks! Rocks, Fossils and Landforms of Manitoulin Island*, a long-overdue guide to the geology of the island and nearby areas to the north, was written for the non-specialist. The profusely illustrated 130-page book is a resource for tourists, teachers, students, nature lovers or anyone else who wants to understand the natural history of the beautiful island.

The book's publishers are the Earth Sciences Museum at UW, in partnership with the Geological Association of Canada and the Gore Bay Museum. It was written by Mario Coniglio and Paul Karrow, both UW professors of earth sciences, and Peter Russell, curator of UW's Earth Sciences Museum.

"Early visitors and settlers would have been inclined, just as we are, to think of the natural setting of Manitoulin Island, with its escarpments, glacially sculpted bedrock

and rocky shorelines, as a forever unchanging, permanent landscape," the three authors say in the book's introduction. "Today, we see homes and cottages, pastures, croplands and highways where endless forests previously stood. But what existed before the forests? If you answered 'glaciers from the Ice-Age,' what existed before the glaciers? . . .

"The Manitoulin Island area is an excellent natural laboratory to learn about the Earth," they write. As the northernmost expression of the Niagara Escarpment in Ontario, the area offers an impressive diversity of well-displayed geological features in a relatively small area.

The authors also highlight many interesting facts about Manitoulin, such as being the home of Canada's largest quarry (at Meldrum Bay) and one of North America's oldest quarries (archaeological site at Sheguiandah). The tourist literature often describes Manitoulin as "the world's largest freshwater island."

The first half of the book explores a broad range of concepts needed to appreciate the geology of Manitoulin Island. It goes on to describe two-billion-year-old mountains that are now worn down and exposed as the gently rolling hills of the La Cloche Mountains.

Approximately 500 million years ago, salty seas invaded the area and deposited vast sediments that

now constitute the fossil-rich limestone and dolostone bedrock of the island, magnificently exposed in the Niagara Escarpment. Much more recently, extensive glaciation in the last Ice Age, followed by glacial melting, were largely responsible for the present landforms and topography.

The second half of the book is a field guide to 50 locations in the Manitoulin area where readers are encouraged to make their own observations of the geology and landforms. The authors focused on making the guide user-friendly by including detailed maps and directions, GPS coordinates and indications of where to park.

*Manitoulin Rocks!* can be ordered online from the GAC bookstore, or through UW's Earth Sciences Museum. The authors expect it to be carried by a number of retailers on and near Manitoulin as well. The cost is \$25 (plus GST).

--From the UW media relations office. Sample pages can be viewed at

<http://www.earth.uwaterloo.ca/services/museum>

## Reiner's worst fears (almost) come true

Reiner Mielke has long been worried that the *Mineralogical Record* would do a comprehensive feature on collecting in Cobalt, Ontario -- thus sharing Reiner's favorite collecting spot with the rest of the world. His fears almost came true this summer, when *Rock & Gem*

ran an article about Cobalt in their May 2006 issue. Luckily the article doesn't give away any secrets.

## Trouble in Tucson

Seven tons of allegedly smuggled rare fossils from Argentina were seized by US federal agents at the Tucson show, according to an article published in the February 24, 2006 *Arizona Daily Star*.

The 10,000 items were seized from the [Rhodo Company](#), a long-time exhibitor at Tucson. However, it is not clear the items were actually in the country illegally, since Argentina only passed a law prohibiting fossil exports in 2003, and the items could have entered the USA before then.

## Close Call for the Earth on July 3

An 0.6 kilometre size asteroid sailed past the Earth on the morning of July 3, missing the earth by only 430,000 kilometres --- about the distance from the Moon. The asteroid, called 2004 XP 14, was discovered only 2 years ago and is one of a current list of 783 potentially hazardous objects. Had it hit the Earth, a crater as big as 15 km could have been formed.

## Famous Mineralogist Forced out at Syracuse U.

Steven Chamberlain, a well-known mineralogist at Syracuse University in the US, was recently forced to resign from his university position following a scandal.

Until 2006, Chamberlain was a professor of Bioengineering and Neuroscience at Syracuse University. According to a press release issued by Syracuse University, Chamberlain engaged in "egregious personal misconduct of physical and emotional abuse involving several individuals".

Chamberlain is a world-recognized authority on the minerals of New York State. His personal collection is said to include 25,000 specimens. According to the [Mineralogical Record label archive](#), Chamberlain's collection "as a whole is characterized by extensive representation of high-end specimens, many unique specimens, and extraordinary depth in specimens of scientific and historical interest." For many years he has been the chairman of the Rochester Mineralogical Symposium, held annually in April.

For more about his collection, see <http://www.nysam.org/scc/>.

## Another Edmontosaurus excavated -- guess where?

That's right, Edmonton. According to a July 5 Canadian Press article, Philip J. Currie, a paleontologist at the University of Alberta, is excavating an entire herd of *Edmontosaurus* fossils in an Edmonton suburb.

The name *Edmontosaurus* comes from the Edmonton Formation, not the city. In fact, these are the first *Edmontosaurus* fossils found in Edmonton.

*Edmontosaurus* was a duck-billed dinosaur that lived in the Cretaceous period, about 65 million years ago.

## Club History Quiz -- Answers

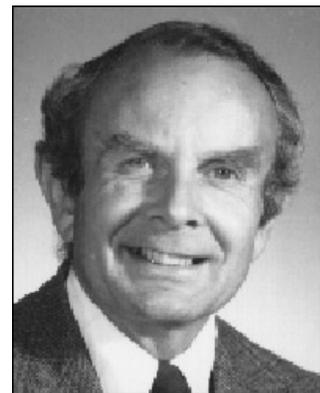
1. The "Kitchener-Waterloo Rock and Mineral Club". The word "rock" was changed to "gem" in December 1965.
2. The Dundas Quarry, where pyrite, celestite, galena, and calcite were found.
3. Stuart Harris; he's a professor at Calgary. See the interview elsewhere in this newsletter.

# INTERVIEW WITH STUART HARRIS

Stuart Harris was our club's first president, from October 1965 to 1966. I recently interviewed him by phone at his home in Calgary.

JOS: Tell me how the club started and how you came to be president.

SH: I became president because I was teaching geology at WLU, Waterloo Lutheran University as it was called then. The Lutherans agreed we could use the space in the department to hold our meetings free of charge, and that was important when starting a club. We had a reasonable number of enthusiasts, including a number of people from the area and people from Toronto who came to KW. KW was a growing area and they took part. They knew about Bancroft and wanted to do field work up on the Shield. Harry Gardner had a cottage up there. He and I went up and collected some very fine actinolite, gem quality actinolite. I was holding the chisel and he was holding the hammer, and bang! I still have a piece of gem quality actinolite in my forehead.



JOS: How many members did you have?

SH: We had a reasonable number of people, we got up to about 40 or 50 or so, and we tried to get youngsters involved. You know, the trouble with clubs is that people get older and it's hard for them to get out, so it's important to get young people involved. We also did a little work on fossils, but mostly people were more interested in minerals and gems, and gold.

JOS: What was it like at WLU when you were there?

SH: When I first went to teach at WLU, there were virtually no specimens in the lab. My wife and I had to go to the local quarries and gather together a teaching collection, and that's how I learned about the local collecting possibilities. We had a silent auction to raise funds, and it was quite a going concern. However, I was only there a year. In 1966 I left to go the University of Kansas, Lawrence.

JOS: How long were you in Lawrence?

SH: I was there for three years. You know, it's the middle of the country and the middle of nothing. There is a big prison, Leavenworth, but not much else. I taught about soil because there were not many minerals. I left for Calgary in 1969 and have been teaching there ever since. I have specialized in studying permafrost. The first map of permafrost in Canada, in 1971, had only 10 data points. Roger Brown came out to Calgary and looked for permafrost and couldn't find it. He drilled holes to and asked me to monitor them, and that's how I got involved in studying permafrost.

JOS: Thanks for your time.

SH: Thank you. How is the club doing?

JOS: Pretty well: we have about 75 people on our mailing list, and meetings attract about 20-30 people.

SH: I'm really glad to hear that the club is still thriving and I wish you the best of luck in the future.

JOS: And the same to you!

## Fall Event Schedule

On **September 6 2006** we'll meet at our usual venue, the "Button Factory" (aka Waterloo Community Arts Centre) at 25 Regina St. South, Waterloo, at 7:30 PM. This is our annual "Show and Tell". Bring minerals you've collected or obtained during the summer and give a short talk! Also, Bo Renneckendorf will give a mini talk on the "cosmic source of rocks".

On **September 10 2006** there will be a fossil collecting trip to the St. Mary's Quarry in Bowmanville, Ontario. All safety equipment is required as this is a working quarry and you must be at least 16 years of age. Pre-registration is required on this trip. Contact Randy Ernst at [renst1004@rogers.com](mailto:renst1004@rogers.com) or 416-494-4276 to register.

On **September 16-17 2006** the **Gem & Mineral Club of Scarborough** presents "Wonders of the Earth", Saturday 10 AM - 6PM, Sunday 11 AM - 5 PM. Demonstration, kids' auction, door prizes, snack bar, kids' quarry, live auction, silent auction, free parking. Admission \$3 adults, \$1 child. Mid-Scarborough Community Centre, 2467 Eglinton Ave. E., Toronto. For further information, call (416) 282-5319 or (416) 438-8908.

On **September 23 2006** the CCFMS will have their semi-annual trip to the Beamsville Quarry.

On **September 24 2006** the CCFMS will have their semi-annual trip to the Dundas Quarry.

On **October 4 2006** we'll meet at our usual venue, the "Button Factory" (aka Waterloo Community Arts Centre) at 25 Regina St. South, Waterloo, at 7:30 PM.

On **October 13-14-15 2006** the Michigan Mineralogical Society will host the **Greater Detroit Gem, Mineral, Fossil and Jewelry Show**, South Macomb Community College Expo Center, Building P, 12 Mile & Hayes, Warren, Michigan. Friday, 9 AM - 7 PM, Saturday 10 AM - 7 PM, Sunday 11 AM - 5 PM. Admission fee.

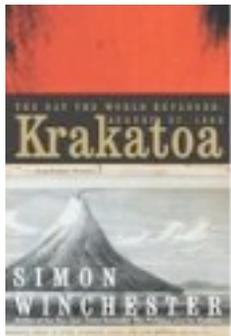
On **November 1 2006** we'll meet at our usual venue, the "Button Factory" (aka Waterloo Community Arts Centre) at 25 Regina St. South, Waterloo, at 7:30 PM.

On **November 4-5 2006**, the **University of Waterloo** presents the **Annual Gem and Mineral Show**, from 10 AM to 5 PM, at the Earth Sciences Museum in the CEIT building on the UW campus. This year's theme is "Carved in Stone". For more info, call (519) 888-4567, ext. 32469, or visit [www.openhouse.uwaterloo.ca](http://www.openhouse.uwaterloo.ca).

On **November 11-12 2006**, the **Gem and Mineral Club of Burlington** hosts their annual **Gem and Mineral Show** at the Mainway Recreation Centre, 4015 Mainway, Burlington, Ontario (NE corner of Walkers Line and Mainway). 10 AM - 6 PM Saturday; 10 AM - 5 PM Sunday.

On **December 6 2006** we'll meet at our usual venue, the "Button Factory" (aka Waterloo Community Arts Centre) at 25 Regina St. South, Waterloo, at 7:30 PM. This is our 2nd annual live auction and holiday party.

## Rock Book Review: **Krakatoa** by Simon Winchester



Simon Winchester has produced an interesting and comprehensive account of one of the world's largest catastrophes in modern times: the explosion of the Javanese volcano Krakatoa on August 27, 1883. Winchester is a former geologist and writer well known for his previous book, *The Professor and the Madman*, an account of the origins of the Oxford English Dictionary.

*Krakatoa* is a splendid ramble through the past and present of Indonesian volcanology. Along the way we learn about plate tectonics, continental drift, island biogeography, meteorology, and a dozen other topics. If I have any criticism of the book, it is that it sometimes rambles *too* much: more than once the author resorts to a long footnote for some tangential point. But other than this small fault, this is recommended reading. --- JOS

*Krakatoa* by Simon Winchester, Perennial, paperback, \$21.95.

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## Kitchener-Waterloo Gem and Mineral Club

### Mailing Address:

Kitchener-Waterloo Gem and Mineral Club  
c/o Peter Russell  
46-121 University Avenue E.  
Waterloo, ON N2J 4J1  
Canada

### Officers:

**Co-Presidents:** Gary Winkler (519) 836-0699  
Gary Partlow (519) 863-6515

**Treasurer:** Reiner Mielke (519) 886-4577

### Field Trip Chairman:

Jeffrey Shallit (519) 743-8754

**Newsletter Editor:** Jeffrey Shallit (519) 743-8754

**Kid's Club Coordinator:** Scott Rose, (519) 885-0674

### Club Website:

<http://www.calaverite.com/kwgmcc>

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