



**Central Canadian Federation of Mineralogical Societies
Fédération des sociétés de minéralogie du centre du Canada**

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CCFMS Awards Program / Programme de prix FSMCC

English version

**Alf Newnham – Rockhound Hall of Fame Award, Senior Category – 2023
Nominated by the Nipissing Rock and Mineral Club**

Why is Alf Newnham deserving of the Rockhounding and Lapidary Hall of Fame Award, Senior Category?

Alf Newnham is a national treasure. He has been rockhounding for the better part of 7 decades and has inspired and shared his knowledge and passion with hundreds of fellow rockhounds over those years. At least two of those he has inspired went on to pursue careers in geology or mining. He is a long-time member of several CCFMS-affiliated clubs and has led many field trips for CCFMS members (and non-CCFMS groups). Members of the Nipissing Rock and Mineral Club (NRMC) have been the fortunate recipients of his generosity and knowledge for the past 7 years.

Alf has led numerous field trips for the NRMC to the Blue Points Amethyst Mine near Thunder Bay, the Princess Sodalite Mine near Bancroft, the Beryl Pit near Quadeville, the Gutz Farm near Combermere, and the Blue Apatite Occurrence north of Kingston. As an amazing and inspiring field trip leader, he makes sure all participants are learning, finding specimens, and having fun. He shares his time, his knowledge, and his passion for rocks and minerals with everyone. As a field trip leader, he also keeps a constant watch on participants to make sure everyone is working safely. Whether Alf is leading a trip or just tagging along as a participant, he spends much of his time teaching others the finer points of rockhounding, identifying what participants have found, and inspiring everyone with his enthusiasm, knowledge, and generosity. Many of the specimens he unearths he gives away to other participants. Alf is so skilled at collecting that most of the 'rejects' he shares with others are better than everyone else's best specimens!

In addition to his amazing skill at finding and identifying rocks and minerals, Alf is the go-to person in our club for information on cleaning and preparing specimens. Anyone who has seen Alf's beautiful amethyst samples for sale at rock and mineral shows will attest to his skills in this area. Alf also creates beautiful faceted gems from the minerals he collects, as well as superbly prepared micro-mounts.

Alf is also exceptionally generous in donating rock and mineral samples to our club. Over the years he has donated hundreds of fantastic samples that the club has used as prizes at our monthly club meetings, provided to students during club educational events, or used to raise money at public events. Moreover, his support and encouragement were critical to the success of our club's first public show and sale last spring.

The attached testimonials illustrate the respect and admiration our members have for Alf and the impact he has made on our club. We even wrote and sang a song at our club's 65th anniversary to honour Alf. We feel so fortunate to have Alf in our club and enthusiastically nominate him for the CCFMS' Rockhounding and Lapidary Hall of Fame Award, Senior Category.



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Testimonials from NRMCC Club Members

Along with members of the Nipissing Rock and Mineral Club, I had the privilege of being on many fantastic rockhounding adventures with Alf Newnham, where Alf was either an awesome field trip leader or an enthusiastic participant (Marmoraton Mine, Princess Sodalite Mine, Sherman Mine, blue apatite occurrence, mines near Elk Lake and Gowganda and environs, River Valley Garnet Mine, Kafka Quarry, Blue Points Amethyst Mine, Gutz Farm Corundum, Crocan Lake Kyanite, and more). Although leading these trips required untold hours of research and preparation behind the scenes, Alf did this for our club. Alf makes rockhounding fun and fascinating! No matter what his role on field trips, Alf always helps rockhounds of all ages to unearth great specimens, to identify what we find, and to appreciate the significance of the treasures we discover. Alf has also supported the NRMCC in many other ways – by participating in events and shows, despite the hundreds of kilometers from our club to his home, by demonstrating the fine art of faceting, and by generously donating countless perfectly-labelled specimens for our draw prizes, games for kids, and public giveaways. For all of these reasons, the CCFMS 2023 Hall of Fame Award should go to Alf Newnham! Kandyd Szuba, NRMCC Co-president

Alf has influenced many lives. He has taught at the university level and led numerous field trips. His knowledge of how to label correctly, where to find and how to clean minerals is boundless. If in doubt, Alf is the person who will help. One is always aware of where he is on a field trip as his vehicle will be surrounded by people wanting to learn. Alf's generosity is also well known; there are many who travel home from a field trip with a special mineral to add to their collection from Alf. He has donated boxes of minerals to our club for gifts or prizes. Alf is a person who I feel deserves recognition for a life of teaching and encouraging the finding and identification of minerals. Julia Breckenridge, NRMCC Co-president and founder of the Crystal Cave Canada

Aside from Alf's exceptional service to the rockhounding community with his knowledge and mentorship, he has strength of character and is someone that has gained my, and obviously that of countless others, respect. Ever since the first day I gave him a cold call about joining a field trip (just after he'd spent a day cutting firewood on a cool dreary day) when we chatted for most of an hour and shared stories of rocks and life, I realized how caring Alf is as an individual. Alf is truly a rare gem!! Lloyd Hall, NRMCC Secretary

Alf is a wonderful addition to any field trip, whether he is leading the trip or simply a participant. As an amazing and inspiring field trip leader, he makes sure all participants are learning, finding specimens, and having fun. He shares his time, his knowledge, and his passion for rocks and minerals with everyone. He also keeps a constant watch on participants to make sure everyone is working safely. And he makes sure all the paperwork is completed which makes life easier for me! Alf is a truly kind and generous person. He is a national treasure and certainly deserves to be in the CCFMS Rockhounding Hall of Fame! Brian Naylor, NRMCC Field Trip Coordinator

My husband and I visited two mines this summer with the Nipissing Rock and Mineral Club. We had the pleasure of having Alf Newnham as our field trip leader on both of our mine site visits. Alf is an experienced miner with a wealth of knowledge that he was happy to share with us. He's passionate, energetic and made our mining excursions truly unforgettable. Alf made us all feel comfortable by making safety a number one priority. He taught us how to properly use the tools so



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we were successful in finding beautiful stones to take home with us. Alf is a real gem and we can't wait for our next adventure with him as our guide. Nancy Webb, NRMCC member

A person I randomly met while rockhounding told me if I was ever interested in going to the Princess Sodalite Mine in Bancroft, to make sure Alf was there when I went, and to meet him. The first time we met, Alf came out to the 'farm' and pointed out minerals for me. Then when I didn't recognize them, he climbed over the fence to get them for me. Such a kind, patient, wonderful man. Second time I went to the PS Mine, my wife was along, and once again, he climbed over the fence and talked with us, and helped my wife and I find some outstanding minerals, and then gave us a brief outline of where they came from. When I heard that Alf was a member of the NRMCC, that was an added incentive to join the club. Finding out that Alf was leading the rockhounding to Blue Points Mine really meant all the difference for the 15 hours of driving it would require each way. Collecting at Blue Points with Alf, and the rest of NRMCC members that were there, and also at the Sherman Mine, Alf was the perfect guide. His humor and knowledge are true gifts. When I think of all the kind people I have met through rockhounding, and honestly, there have been quite a few, those who are willing to share their knowledge and experience with others and do it happily, and patiently, Alf is one of the top people I have had the privilege to meet. Jim Osaer, NRMCC member

I met Alf for the first time at the Princess Sodalite Mine. I was a total newbie and had no idea what I was looking at. I also had a bum knee which prevented me from doing much searching. Alf very kindly brought me a stunning piece of amethyst and was just so kind. Then we met again at Blue Points and he came by to help me find good spots to dig. He didn't make me feel like a fool when I slid down the rocks and tore the back out of my jeans lol. He has a lovely personality and is so down to earth. He is certainly a credit to rockhounding and is always eager to share his knowledge and experience. Laurie Osaer, NRMCC member

Alf takes the time to make you feel at home on field trips and share his vast knowledge in a friendly, amusing manner. Even if you were a new member, he treated you with respect and generosity. Clyde Chamberlain, NRMCC member

Alf Newnham is always willing to share his knowledge and assists everyone on our collecting trips. Nancy and Walter Marchl, NRMCC members

We had a great time with Alf at the Sodalite Mine. He was very helpful explaining what to look for and where. When we found other different rocks, he seemed to know exactly what they all were. Wade and Alison Hines, NRMCC members



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Alf Newnham in action



Alf with his tables of gorgeous specimens at the first ever Nipissing Rock and Mineral Club sale and auction in April 2023. The superb quality of Alf's specimens helped to generate a buzz and make our first show a success!



Alf demonstrating how to facet an apatite crystal for a video on the club's Facebook page.



Alf making sure all the paperwork for a field trip is complete.



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Alf helping club members extract sodalite from the old mine dump at the Princess Sodalite Mine.



Alf with a fabulous amethyst specimen he helped a club member collect at the Blue Points Amethyst Mine.



No matter how much time he spends helping others, Alf still has some of the best finds of the day.



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Alf doing what he does (and likes) best. Sharing knowledge with fellow rockhounds.