



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

CCFMS c/o Secretary, 34 Langford Church Rd, Brantford, ON N3T 5L4

FSMCC a/s Secrétaire, 34 rue Langford Church, Brantford, ON N3T 5L4

<http://www.ccfms.ca/>

[executiveofCCFMS@ccfms.ca](mailto:executiveofCCFMS@ccfms.ca)

### CCFMS Awards Program / Programme de prix FSMCC

#### CCFMS Outstanding Public Education Award 2023 The Sudbury Rock and Lapidary Society, Sudbury, Ontario Nominated by the Nipissing Rock and Mineral Club Inc.

“To recognize CCFMS-affiliated clubs, an individual or group from a CCFMS-affiliated club, or an outside organization that excelled in public education in the realm of rocks, minerals, fossils, geology, lapidary, or any combination – plaque.”

#### Rationale

**Background** - The Sudbury Rock and Lapidary Society (SRLS) has held its annual 3-day Gem and Mineral show for 41 years, and public education has always been a prominent feature. Betty Parry of Robert Hall originals and RH Lapidary, has been “in the business” of exhibiting at rock and mineral shows for 51 years. At the 41<sup>st</sup> SRLS gem show in 2023, Betty said “In my 51 years of exhibiting, I don’t know of any other show that has as many educational displays and activities for children.”



Children enjoying the activities in the Kids Corner at the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual SRLS Gem and Mineral Show in 2023

Ruth Debicki, current president of the SRLS, has made public education a priority at the SRLS gem show since 1987 when she became directly involved in organizing it. When asked why the SRLS makes such extraordinary efforts in this regard, Ruth said that public education is one of the goals of the SRLS, as expressed in the constitution, and “We are trying to encourage interest in geoscience and rock and mineral collecting among show visitors of all ages”.

The variety of exhibitors with information on aspects of geology and rockhounding, and the diversity of displays, activities, demonstrations, and videos is truly outstanding!

**Exhibitors** - Show organizers worked hard to bring in practitioners who are connected to geosciences and rockhounding, in addition to a wide variety of vendors. For example, in 2023, there were display tables hosted by:

- The Sudbury Prospectors and Developers Association
- The Ontario Geological Survey
- Laurentian University’s Harquail School of Earth Sciences, and
- The Northern Ontario Relic and Treasure Hunters



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The public was able to talk one-on-one with prospectors, geologists, students, and metal detectorists.

**Kids Corner** - Dynamic Earth and Science North helped the SRLS to host the “Kids Corner” with many fun and engaging activities for kids, including:

- gold panning
- make your own rock collection
- colouring, rock crafts, and more

Children were engrossed in the activities available at this show. They also received a free sample of spodumene upon entry to the show.

**Displays** - The show featured many informative and attractive display cases covering interesting topics, such as:

- A Rainbow of Colours in Minerals
- What’s so Critical About Minerals?
- Fossils of Ontario
- Totblocks, a New Way to Teach Mineralogy Using 3-D Printed Modular Building Blocks
- Ophiolite Minerals From Canada’s Rocky and Appalachian Mountains
- The Lapidary Arts, and
- Minerals of the World



**Live Demonstrations** - SRLS club members put on live demonstrations for visitors on:

- Gem identification
- Wire wrapping, and
- Flint knapping

This was a major commitment of time for club members volunteering at the 3-day show.

**Videos** – There were interesting videos running during the show on a wide variety of Earth Sciences topics. For example:

- A rock and mineral video produced under the “Eyewitness” banner, and one produced by National Geographic
- The history of a quartz crystal
- Sinkholes
- Mount Saint Helens
- Cobalt silver mining
- Nickel and copper mining, and more



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**Silent Auction** – The SRLS show featured a large, continuous silent auction of interesting specimens that are very often purchased by young people. This is a great way for kids, who may not have much money, to participate in a show and go home with special pieces.

**Field Trip** - There was a half-day field trip to collect kyanite at a site in nearby Wahnapiatae. This trip was open to the public for \$4.00 each, which covered the cost of insurance. The trip is an annual feature of the SRLS show, and was hosted by Ed Debicki, a geologist with more than 50 years of experience. What an incredible opportunity for visitors attending this wonderful show!

### Conclusion

Many rock and mineral clubs provide some activities and displays for the public, over and above the wonders for sale by vendors. However, the sheer number and variety of educational activities for the public offered by the SRLS in 2023, combined with the beauty of the displays, the interactions with practitioners that were possible, and the fact that SRLS has been highlighting education at their annual show for 41 years, makes the SRLS stand out. This year the 3-day SRLS annual gem show attracted 3,400 people. Thus, the impact of the public education aspects of this show is significant.

For these reasons, we are very pleased to nominate the Sudbury Rock and Lapidary Society for the CCFMS “Outstanding Public Education Award” in 2023.

### More Pictures From the 2023 SRLS Gem Show:



Gemstone identification



Wire wrapping demo





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Critical minerals display



Minerals of the world display



Manned OGS Display



Kids' rock collections



Manned relic hunters booth



Ophiolite minerals display