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### George recognized for life's work

Nova Scotia Gem and Mineral Society honours founding father

PARRSBORO  
ANDREW WAGSTAFF  
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Eldon George displays the plaque he received from the Nova Scotia Gem and Mineral Society at the annual Nova Scotia Gem and Mineral Show last weekend.

After 61 years in business, Eldon George has hung a for sale sign in the window of his Parrsboro Rock and Mineral Shop.

After a lifetime dedicated to collecting and promoting local fossil and mineral discoveries, poor health has caused the internationally-renowned rock hound to make some tough decisions.

"I've had four heart attacks and a triple bypass in the last two or three years," said George, who has also recently had to cope with the death of his only child, son Wayne. "My health has slowed me up and I just don't have the energy to get out collecting like I used to do."

Although he said it was very hard to put the for sale sign up, he said he is hopeful that someone else can come along and take over, and keep the shop running for years to come.

Between the walls of George's Atlantic Avenue shop lies 72 years worth of discoveries, ranging from every local gem and mineral under the sun to some rare fossil finds that have included the world's smallest dinosaur footprints. Under some of the shelves lie countless stacks of boxes containing other fossils that he had no room to display.

While he said he can't afford to give them away, George said he hopes to see the fossils go to nearby Fundy Geological Museum, which he had a hand in developing more than 15 years ago. He also started a little event called the Rockhound Roundup in Parrsboro at St. George's Anglican Church Hall in 1966.

"We had 160 people registered from outside Parrsboro, and we thought that was pretty good for a first-time event," said George. "Within four years, we had 3,000 people coming to Parrsboro for the Rockhound Roundup."

Now known as the Nova Scotia Gem and Mineral Show, the annual event still packs them in. As a highlight of this year's show last weekend, members of the Nova Scotia Gem and Mineral Association were on hand during opening ceremonies on Friday to present George with a plaque for his lifetime achievements.

"Most people here know that Eldon started (the Rockhound Roundup,) but a lot don't know he was a founding father of the Nova Scotia Gem and Mineral Society in 1957," said Bill Blinn, association president. "We wanted to present something to him in appreciation for his dedicating his life to this." Longtime association member Bill MacDonald, who was also on hand for the presentation, described George as the king of fossils in Nova Scotia.

Both men said they were surprised that, with all the fanfare surrounding the opening of the Joggins Fossil Centre, there was nary a mention of George, and his life's work in the same region.

"They just passed him by," said MacDonald. "And no one's done more for fossils in Nova Scotia."

While George said he was glad to see his longtime friend, Don Reid, given just due for his years as the "keeper of the cliffs" in Joggins, he admitted that he felt slighted by having his efforts ignored. "They're trying to grab all the credit of fossils found in Joggins and lead people to believe that it's the only place they're found, and that's not correct," said George. "I'm not looking for praise. I do this because I love it. I've done it since I was six years old, and I've met a lot of people, but I really do feel that they have gone out of their way to avoid talking about me."

As for the gem and mineral show, he said he is proud to see how it has continued to grow and draw more and more people. Although he admits he would like to see it stick to rocks, minerals, gemstones and fossils and stay away from things like beads, glass and souvenirs, he said he is thrilled to see its wonderful displays, especially to see people who have returned faithfully since 1966.

"That makes me feel good, that people have supported the Rockhound Roundup over the years and are still coming," said George. "It's growing bigger and better every year, and there's no reason why it can't be an international thing in the future. We don't have to take a backseat to anyone."

22/08/09



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**Amherst Oldie from Amherst, Nova Scotia writes:** Its sad to see someone that I've held in high regard for so many years react this way. In no way that I know did Eldon George add to the scientific knowledge of Joggins. He has certainly done his share in the Parrsboro area, but attacking the new Joggins Fossil Center isn't a great way to prolong your legacy. Also, being called the King of Fossils in Nova Scotia is very subjective, there are plenty of others that you could say the same thing. Eldon also says he had a major part in the development of the Fundy Geological Museum. If the roles were reversed I guarantee you that Don Reid would not have acted in this manner. If Eldon wants to be remembered in Joggins go to the beach and find something important and stop crying over spilt milk.

Posted 21/08/2009 at 11:20 AM | [Alert an Editor](#) | [Link to comment](#)

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