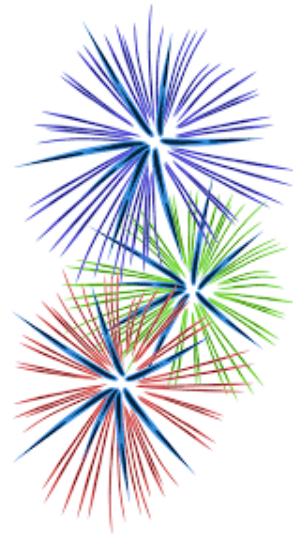


# THE ROCKET

**HAPPY NEW YEAR !!! January 2023**

deadline for next issue  
February 10, 2023

Club email: [secretary.hrc@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.hrc@gmail.com)  
Newsletter email: [Edrocket18@gmail.com](mailto:Edrocket18@gmail.com)  
Roz MacLean – editor



**Future Meetings:** Our monthly meetings are on the fourth Friday of the month.

**Next Meeting:** Friday – January 27 at 7PM  
at Hastings Community Center Hall

This meeting will be a “hybrid meeting.” For those unable to attend in person, please contact our secretary, Crystal, for a zoom link for the meeting.

## **Next Meeting Program:**

Harley Waterson is coming back! This time his topic is Jasper. If you remember his talk on Agates you know we will learn and see lots. Bring in some of your own samples too.



## **Program from last Meeting:**

Last meeting was our Annual General meeting with elections. (The results are on the next page.) Dawn had a big discounted sale of beads etc. as a fund raiser for the club and helping her friend clear things. We also had a mystery gift bag draw and a Wine and Snacks social time.

*Thanks Nickell for the photos.*



## Election results for 2023 executive committee.

Position	Name
Sunshine	Afton
Historian	Vera
Director at large	Nick
Hastings to centre	*no one*
Field trip	Kyle and Wesley
Librarian	Joyce
Membership	Nickell
Program	Linda & Afton can help informally
Publication	Roz
Publicity	*we somehow left this at the meeting, but maybe Arlene is willing to continue to run this position?
Show chair	Sante & Linda
Social	Elly
Ways & Means	Jaime & Joyce
Workshop	Committee (Sante the main convenor)
Senior to BCLS	Nickell
Intermediate to BCLS	Scott
Junior to BCLS	Sam
Treasurer	Renee
Secretary	Crystal
Vice President	Afton
President	Diane



If you are a member in good standing, have taken the required lapidary workshop training course, you can drop in at the workshops and use the equipment on a first come, first served (shared) basis. Be prepared to work on another project if you need to wait to use a particular piece of equipment,

<b>Lapidary:</b>	Monday	6:30 pm - 9:30 pm	Richard
	Wednesday	1:00 pm - 4:00 pm	David
	Thursday	6:30 pm - 9:30 pm	Tim
	Saturday	1:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Robert
<b>Silversmithing</b>	Wednesday	9:00am – 12:00 noon	Bob
	Saturday	9:00am – 12:00 noon	Robert

## Filling Grab Bags for Our Show

January 24 at 6:45pm in the workshop. Here is a chance to help the club prepare for our show. Come out and wrap the specimens for our grab bags. We are welcoming first timers and those who were out before. See you there!

## Calling all sewers and Rockhounds. Do you have a fabric stash you could raid to support our club?

We need about **300 grab bags** for our show. This fund raiser is such a popular part of our annual show that teachers, budding rockhounds and other people just wait to attend to get 'their fill'.

You can help by making some bags. A piece of fabric 18 cm X 44 cm (7 inches by 17 ¼ inches) that is folded once and sewn, then folded over at the top and sewn to make a channel to put a draw string through will make a finished bag 16 x 20 cm (6 ¼ inch x 7 ¾ inch ). You can put the draw string in or others will. Linda will bring samples at the meeting for those wanting one.

The type of materials needed for the bags is up to you- but the kids like bright colours and texture if possible- fuzzy always goes first!

## We need Rock Donations.

**Please sort through your collections and see what would be wonderful to receive and find in the grab bags that will be for sale at the show. Jasper is very nice.**

The rocks and pebbles need to be big enough not to be swallowed, but at the same time not too big as to fit into the bag, fist size is maximum (5cm square is perfect- 2 inch x 2 inch).

Of course, no toxic rocks - lead sulfate (galena), bumblebee jasper (arsenic), and the like. We never put obsidian in the bags since it can become chipped and then can cut like a knife to anyone trying to clean up the shards (known to be the first surgeon's tools in history).

Members can bring the items for grab bag donations to either the workshop marked for the purpose, or at the meetings.

## Newsletter submissions

This time of year when water has washed some rock cuts and the rivers may be low, people start thinking about Rockhounding. See the BC Lapidary website for recommendations and preparations.

BC Lapidary Society Field trips are announced on their Facebook page. (I haven't seen any recent ones announced.)

Washington State Mineral Council offers some great trips, just across the border: Washington State Mineral Council.

If you've been out **Rockhounding or on a Field Trip** we'd like to hear about it. You don't have to share your secret site but we'd like to know about your finds. If you know someone you'd like us to feature, tell me your suggestions and I'll follow up with them. Thanks, Roz (Editor). [Edrocket18@gmail.com](mailto:Edrocket18@gmail.com)

## BC Lapidary Society News

**2023 Calendars** are available for purchase (\$10). A photo taken by our club member Nick Tsougrianis is featured one month.

**Vernon: ROCK & GEM AUCTION.** FEBRUARY 8TH. From the Estate of long time Gemologist and Lapidary Society member David Barclay & Owner of C&D Gemcraft. Location:- Vernon Science and Arts Centre. 2704-Hwy 6 Vernon B.C. Open to Club Members and the Viewing Public at 6:30 pm. Cash sales only. Proceeds to DAVID BARCLAY BURSARY FUND (Dave passed away in November).

**Parksville and District Rock and Gem Club** is hosting its first ever **ROCK AND MINERAL SALE!!!** Mark your calendars for April 29 and 30. Sales event will be at the Qualicum Beach Civic Centre 747 Jones Street Qualicum Beach. Lots of vendors that work with various aspects of rock and minerals. Lots of items at all price points for everyone!

## Rendezvous

**Rendezvous** Quesnel, BC, June 9 — 11, 2023, Barlow Creek Hall, Quesnel, BC. Rendezvous is the British Columbia Lapidary Society's annual gathering and features field trips, displays, auctions, and our annual general meeting. Organized by the Quesnel Tumbling Rivers Rock Club with the assistance of the British Columbia Lapidary Society, it will be held at Barlow Creek Hall and Campground.

## Upcoming Events of Interest: Shows

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/GROUPS/HASTINGS.ROCKHOUDS | WWW.HASTINGSCENTREROCKHOUDS.COM

HASTINGS CENTRE  
ROCKHOUDS CLUB  
PRESENTS

# ROCK INTO SPRING!

62<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL ROCK, GEM & JEWELRY SHOW

MARCH 18-19, 2023  
SATURDAY & SUNDAY | 10AM-5PM

KNOWLEDGEABLE VENDORS    ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN  
REFRESHMENTS    DEMONSTRATIONS & DISPLAYS  
PRIZES    FUN FOR ALL AGES

ADMISSION BY DONATION

HASTINGS COMMUNITY CENTRE | 3096 EAST HASTINGS STREET | VANCOUVER, BC

## **BC Gem Show**, May 12, 13 & 14 at the Chilliwack Heritage Park

The BC Gem Show is the largest show in the province, featuring displays, dealers, demonstrations, and activities for the kids. Adults \$6, students (6-17) \$2, 3 day Pass \$12. Tickets available at the door. Free Parking.

There will be **Demonstrations of activities like** Stone carving, cabochon making, wire wrapping, bead making, flint knapping and many more! Kid's Crafts, Spin & Win, Lots of displays of finds and work by clubs throughout the province. Vendors of slabs, beads, specimens etc. They are talking of a return of the tailgate too. We'll keep you posted.

*The following clubs are having shows and sales. For more information visit the BC Lapidary Society website or the club websites.*

## **Hastings Rockhounds Gem and Mineral Show 2023 March 18 & 19, 2023 at Hastings Community Centre**

February 25, 26, 2023, **Maple Ridge Lapidary Club** Albion Community Centre  
March 11 & 12, 2023, **Alberni Valley Rock & Gem Club** Alberni Athletic Hall  
March 17, 18 & 19, **Victoria Lapidary & Mineral Society** Leonardo de Vinci Centre  
April 14, 15 & 16, 2023, **Courtenay Gem & Mineral Club** Legion Hall (Upstairs)  
June 3 & 4, 2023, **Selkirk Rock & Mineral Club** Castlegar Recreation Complex  
June 9-11, 2023, **Quesnel Tumbling Rivers Rock Club** Barlow Creek Hall, Quesnel  
July 15, 2023, **Abbotsford Rock & Gem Tailgate (July)** Central Heights Church Parking Lot  
August 20, 2023, **Fraser Valley Tailgate (August)** Royal Canadian Legion Branch 265 Parking Lot  
September 9, 2023, **Abbotsford Rock & Gem Tailgate** Central Heights Church Parking Lot  
September 16 & 17, 2023, **Fraser Valley Rock & Gem Show** Old Age Pensioners Hall, Aldergrove

**Clippings:** People see rock related items all the time. This is our chance to share it.  
If you see something that might be of interest or give some members a chuckle, please share.

Paul Pinsker alerted me to a Globe and Mail article of October 12, 2022 by Corinne Langston

*How one enormous ugly rock turned my garden into a meeting place*

If you have a Globe and Mail subscription you can access it.

**rockngem.com** has many rock related articles. The latest issue had an article about Rockhound holidays. It seems there is a holiday for everything. **January 7 = Old Rock Day** set aside "to consider how old the Earth is and how it has shaped our lives. It's also a shout-out to some of the earliest geologists like the Theophrates, Pliny the Elder, Ulisse Aldovandi, James Hutton and William Smith."

There is also a funny article about **What is a rockhound?** One quote: "You don't need to carry the label rockhound to be one. I've met people who would scoff if I called them that. The stray rock I saw in their yard or home was just something they picked up because it was pretty or interesting looking. I know one person who has a ping-pong table filled with rocks picked up over the years because they were interesting. In my estimation, all of the above are latent rockhounds."

There is also **A 2023 Rock Show Bucket List**. You might want to check out **rockngem.com**.

This month, the rock is **Alabaster.**



**Calcite Rough**

<https://www.gemstones.com/gemopedia/alabaster>

It is January, a new year and I needed inspiration for Rock articles to write this year that might interest club members. So, I started at the beginning; I combed all my "Rock Books" and lists for something new beginning with "A" and came across Alabaster - a rock I've come across in my travels and don't know much about. It is used for carving and we have some carvers in our club so this may be of interest. When I found out the archaeologists and geologists use the term for different rocks I was hooked.



**Gypsum Rough**

<https://www.britannica.com/science/alabaster>

The word "alabaster" is from the Old French "*alabastr*", derived from the Latin word "*alabaster*", and that from Greek "*alabastros*" which is the Greek word were for a vase of alabaster.

The name may be from ancient Egyptian "*a-labaste*", which refers to vessels of the Egyptian goddess Bast, represented as a lioness and frequently found on top of alabaster vessels. Or the name may have come for the region where these vessels were from. Ancient Roman writers Pliny the Elder and Ptolemy, wrote that the stone used for ointment jars called *alabastra* came from a region of Egypt known as Alabastron or Alabastrites.

I was surprised to learn that even in 1879 (The American Cyclopaedia) they knew the term was being used for two different materials: "**ALABASTER**, the name frequently given to two different mineral substances—the one a sulphate of lime, a pure variety of gypsum, and the other a carbonate of lime, of the same chemical composition as most of the marbles."

Geologists define alabaster only as the gypsum type According to Oxford University Museum of Natural History, geologists use alabaster "only for the compact fine-grained variety of gypsum.

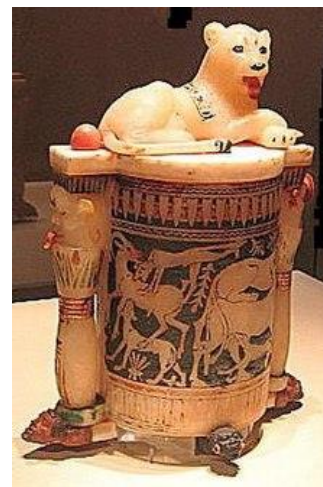
Archaeologists and the stone processing industry use the word in a wider sense that includes varieties of two different minerals: the gypsum of geologists and the fine-grained banded type of calcite. Some of the calcite type has also been called "**onyx-marble**" which according to geologists should be called a compact banded travertine or "a stalagmitic limestone marked with patterns of swirling bands of cream and brown" .

The two types of alabaster have similar properties. They are usually lightly colored, translucent, and soft stones. They have been used throughout history primarily for carving decorative artifacts. They are both easily carved and take a high polish.

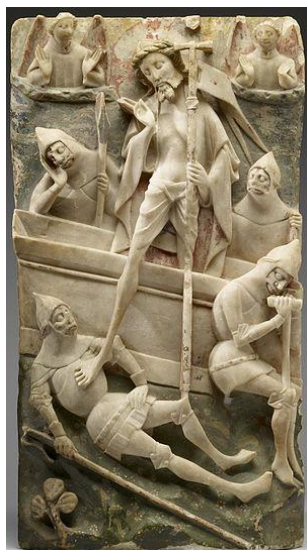
So, the real clues to sort the differences when looking at "alabaster" is Mohs Hardness and Chemistry. Using these types of clues will be really difficult in a museum where you are best to just appreciate the beauty, history, and significance of what you are looking at. If you are buying, you might want to know just what you are getting.

*Gypsum alabaster* is a Mohs hardness of 1.5 to 2 and can be scratched by a fingernail and is almost unaffected by hydrochloric acid. It is a calcium sulfate mineral ( $\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ). It was formed by the evaporation of ancient sea beds. It is the type of alabaster from Medieval Europe.

*Calcite alabaster* is a Mohs hardness of 3 and cannot be scratched by a



Calcite alabaster cosmetic jar topped with a lioness, representing the goddess [Bast](#); from the tomb of [Tutankhamun](#) (d. 1323 BC). [Egyptian Museum, Cairo](#)



[Resurrection of Christ](#), panel from an altarpiece set, 1450–90AD, (gypsum alabaster)

**Nottingham alabaster** is a term used to refer to the English sculpture industry, ... which flourished from the fourteenth century until the early sixteenth century. ... the largest concentration was around [Nottingham](#). This has led to all the English medieval output being referred to as "Nottingham alabaster".

fingernail, but can be scratched by a knife. It also effervesces with hydrochloric acid. It is mainly calcium carbonate ( $\text{CaCO}_3$ ) with impurities that give it colours. It was deposited as a flowstone or stalagmites or stalactites in limestone caves. It is the generally the type from ancient Egypt and the Middle East – Mesopotamia.

Alabaster as a term used by Archaeologists may also refer to a rock geologists call *compact banded travertine*. It is a form deposited by hot springs and has a banded appearance. Some people have used the term Onyx Marble, particularly for rocks from Algeria. It has even been called onyx! Geologists use

the words Onyx and Marble for very different materials. Again, the Mohs scale helps us determine what we are handling.

*Onyx* has a MOHs hardness of 7 and will scratch glass easily.



*Marble* has a MOHs hardness of 3 and is a little harder to determine as it is the same hardness and chemistry as Calcite. According to geologists, marble is metamorphosed limestones and dolostones.

Modern “alabaster” may be either the gypsum type or the calcite type.

Because Alabaster is soft it is carved readily, but it is soluble in water so is not suitable for outdoor purposes. If the smooth polished surface is washed with dishwashing liquid it will become rough, dull and whiter. It will lose much of its translucency and luster. This technique or one like it is used to make gypsum type Alabaster look like Marble.

As for uses, the coarser varieties of gypsum alabaster are converted into plaster of Paris. When cut in thin sheets, alabaster is translucent enough to be used for windows. Some Byzantine churches and medieval ones especially in Italy have these windows. In modern times, large sheets gypsum alabaster are used in the windows of the new Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles.

Alabaster windows in the Church of Santa Maria la Mayor of [Morella](#), Spain (built 13th-16th centuries)

Alabaster is porous and can be dyed to make “alabaster coral” a very soft imitation of coral. Precious Coral used for jewellery has a MOHs hardness of 3.5. If you can find a pre-1996 Canadian penny, a copper coin may be useful for testing the MOHs hardness.

Important sources of gypsum alabaster are in the areas of Volterra and Castelline Marittima in Tuscany Italy and in the Midlands of England. Gypsum is a common material and is found in the US and Canada. Calcite is also found throughout the world.

A side note for travellers:

The name *Travertine* may have come from Tivoli in Italy and travertine from the area has been used extensively in the buildings of Rome. Travertine is exported all over the world. It is relatively soft when first cut, but weathers to a harder, more durable stone. Tufa is also found in some ancient buildings in Rome. When plant material was trapped in the travertine and decayed away it left holes. Particularly holey travertine is known as *tufa*.



Alabaster (head) and marble bust of [Septimius Severus](#) at the [Capitoline Museums, Rome](#)