



ATLANTIC GEOSCIENCE SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

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*Folded Meguma metasedimentary rocks at Feltzen's Beach, near Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. This image, by Ken Renton, won the AGS-sponsored **Last Billion Years Award** held by the Photographic Guild of Nova Scotia in early April.*

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The deadline for submissions to the next issue is
June 12, 2009. Please send articles or feedback to:

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Production of this newsletter is by Nelly Koziel.

When I was asked to become involved with the executive of the Atlantic Geoscience Society last year, I was somewhat surprised and reluctant to get more involved. Since I joined the society in 2005, I have viewed myself as a bit of a black sheep within AGS. My interests lie in water resources, alternative energy, and climate change, which are hardly the core subject matter of the society. Colleagues with similar interests have questioned why I am involved with the society and at times I have struggled to give them a good answer.

I enjoy the annual colloquium and I do think it is important to have a regional geoscience society in Atlantic Canada. Despite the strong history of the society and the world-class research that is presented on many subject areas at each colloquium, it has become apparent that we do not represent the full breadth of geosciences in the region, or at least not well. I have personally struggled with sending my own students to the colloquia for this reason when there are many other competing meetings. While there is benefit in exposing them to other areas of the geosciences, I worry about the level of feedback they receive and their ability to be exposed to ideas within their research areas. I have heard other AGS members express similar opinions pertaining to subject matter in what might be considered fringe areas of the AGS, such as climatology and hydrogeology. It should be noted that a significant percentage of practicing geoscientists in Atlantic Canada work in these areas and they are hardly fringe areas. An examination of other geoscience societies, such as the Geological Society of America and the European Geosciences Union, also supports this idea.

The old adage “the best geologist is the one who has seen the most rocks” certainly has a place in geology but the specific reference to rocks is perhaps no longer valid for the Earth sciences as a whole. As a society, the subject matter presented at our colloquia have been moving in this direction with excellent sessions on climate change, environmental geochemistry, and the Bay of Fundy during our past few conferences, but it has been a slow move. It was particularly troubling that the press release for our last colloquium referred to many topics that were only briefly touched on at the conference and in my opinion do not actually represent the activities of the society. The press release included mention of groundwater, alternative energy, coastal hazards, environmental impacts of mining, and land use issues. These are of great societal relevance and therefore AGS should become more engaged in these areas to remain relevant to society. Perhaps more important, though, is our relevance to the students of today. While many students are interested in subjects such as mineralogy, tectonics, and Earth history, which are well represented at every AGS Colloquium, there is a growing number of students engaged specifically in environmentally-oriented subjects. We need to make sure that we are attracting these students to ensure the long-term health of our society.

In one respect, this note is directed at entirely the wrong audience. I feel as if I am scolding the students who attend in a half empty lecture hall because their colleagues did not show up. However, I feel that it is important to try to get those truant geoscientists in the Atlantic region to join AGS and it is up to us to convince them that we have something to offer. In this, the 150th anniversary of the publication of Darwin’s “*The Origin of Species*”, it seems appropriate to think about how we can evolve in the coming years. AGS is competing with many other societies and it is important to consider what we offer that will ensure our health and survival in coming years.

Grant Ferguson
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AGS ACTIVITIES

Atlantic Geoscience Society Colloquium 2009

The 35th Colloquium and Annual General Meeting of the Atlantic Geoscience Society was held at the Delta Beauséjour Hotel in Moncton, NB, on February 6-7, 2009. Moncton has proven to be a popular venue for AGS members, and this meeting marked the fourth time since 2001 that the “Hub City” has played host to Maritime geoscientists. However, the economic recession may have taken its toll, as the number of attendees was diminished from previous years, with 132 registrants, including 41 students.

The program included a Friday afternoon workshop, 43 oral presentations and 14 posters. The workshop, entitled “Rationalization of the Mississippian stratigraphy of the Maritimes Basin through inter-regional correlations and nomenclatural debate”, was convened by Pierre Jutras (Saint Mary’s University) and moderated by John Waldron (University of Alberta). The workshop format alternated panel or group discussions with presentations from individuals who have worked extensively on Lower Carboniferous sections in the Maritimes, with the objective of determining how and where lithostratigraphic correlations can be supported. Also on Friday, PCS (New Brunswick Division) offered a tour of their underground potash mine in Sussex. PotashCorp has extended this invitation to AGS delegates on several occasions, and the Organizing Committee wishes to extend our thanks to Brian Roulston and Brian Urquhart of PotashCorp for, respectively, organizing and leading the tour.

The technical program, with the general theme of “Current Research in the Atlantic Provinces,” covered a spectrum of topics ranging from Alleghanian orogeny to zircon geochronology, but some subjects appeared with greater frequency, such as evolution of the Appalachian orogen, sedimentology, hydrocarbon geology, Quaternary geology, environmental geochemistry and economic geology. Many thanks are extended to all those who served as session chairs and kept the program on schedule, and to the Acadia University students who acted as audio-visual technical assistants.

Master of ceremonies for the Saturday evening Awards Banquet was outgoing AGS President David Mosher (GSC Atlantic), and the awards presentations themselves were made by incoming President Grant Ferguson (St. Francis Xavier University). Student participation is typically an important part of the AGS Colloquium, and the best presenters in three categories are rewarded with a \$150 cash prize and their name engraved on a handsome plaque. Student awards include the Graham Williams Award for best poster, the Rupert MacNeill Award for best undergraduate presentation, and the new Sandra Barr Award for best graduate student presentation. Accolades go to judges Milton Graves, Ann Miller, Dan

Utting, Cliff Stanley, Ralph Stea, Yana Fedortchouk and John Gosse for performing the unenviable task of selecting successful candidates from a field in which all were winners.

In judging for the Graham Williams Award, Tamara Moss of Acadia University took the honours for her display (co-authored by Cliff Stanley) entitled “Litho-geochemistry of the Quebrada Blanca porphyry copper deposit, Atacama Desert, northern Chile”. Honourable Mention went to Edwin Escarraga of Acadia University, for his poster (co-authored by S. Barr, J.B. Murphy, and M.A. Hamilton) “Field relationships, petrology, and age of Neoproterozoic granitic and syenitic plutons in the Antigonish Highlands, Nova Scotia”.

The Rupert MacNeill Award went to Darren LeFort of Saint Mary’s University for his presentation (co-authored with Georgia Pe-Piper and David Piper) “Petrology of the mafic trigger of the Kos Plateau Tuff super-eruption, 0.16 Ma, Greece. Nicole Peters of Dalhousie University won Honourable Mention for her talk (co-authored by E.L. King and D.B. Scott) “Holocene stratigraphy and micropaleontology of an urban lake, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia”.



Darren LeFort (Saint Mary’s University) accepts the Rupert MacNeill Award for best undergraduate student presentation from incoming AGS President Grant Ferguson. Photograph: Sue Johnson.

Finally, Jamie Braid of St. Francis Xavier University took the Sandra Barr Award for his presentation (co-authored with J.B. Murphy, J.K. Mortensen and C. Quesada) entitled “U-Pb detrital zircon geochronology of the South Portuguese Zone (Southern Iberia): linkages to Avalonia and Meguma”. Honourable Mention went to Tim Bachiu of Dalhousie

University (co-authored with T.A. Clair and A.M. O’Beirne-Ryan) for “An investigation of spatial and temporal variations of chloride concentrations in selected watersheds of southwestern Nova Scotia”.

The AGS banquet is also the occasion to confer our two major AGS awards, the Laing Ferguson Distinguished Service Award for exceptional and altruistic contributions to AGS, and the Gesner Medal, or Distinguished Scientist Award. This year, the Distinguished Service Award went to Nelly Koziel of GSC Atlantic, who has committed much time and energy toward EdGEO workshops, the AGS newsletter, and in sales and distribution of AGS publications. The Gesner Medal was awarded to Dr. John Waldron, who is currently at University of Alberta but for many years was a faculty member at Saint Mary’s University, Halifax. See the citations published separately in this issue for a summary of John’s career and accomplishments, and of Nelly’s contributions to AGS.

The AGS banquet concluded with an after-dinner presentation by Dr. John Spray of UNB, entitled “Deep Impact and the Phoenix Effect”. Dr. Spray is Canada Research Chair in Planetary Materials, Director of the Planetary and Space Science Centre at UNB, and a co-investigator on science teams for NASA’s Mars Science Laboratory and the European Space Agency’s ExoMars rover missions. John’s presentation, the title of which refers to NASA’s Mars lander, entertained the audience with graphic illustrations of high-velocity impacts and their consequences, and current and future missions to our planetary neighbours.



*John Spray (UNB) at the podium during his after-banquet presentation, “Deep Impact and the Phoenix Effect.”
Photograph: Reg Wilson.*

Following the conclusion of the formal program, those who hung around the cash bar, or later retreated to the hospitality suite, were entertained by a performance by the AGS All-Star Band. The band personnel varied somewhat during the evening, but performers included John Waldron, Mike MacDonald, Simon Haslett, Hamish Sandeman, Erin Smith, Martin Gibling, Bob Ryan, David Mosher and Malcolm McLeod, with apologies to anyone who has been overlooked.

The success of this year’s Colloquium can be attributed to the efforts of numerous individuals. Chairman Reg Wilson had a most able team led by Michael Parkhill (New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources – NBDNR), who organized the technical program and compiled the abstract volume, and Jim Walker (NBDNR), who coordinated all activities associated with registration. The Organizing Committee was rounded out by (in alphabetical order) Marc Desrosiers, John Gosse, Nicole Hatheway, Susan Johnson, Elizabeth Kusters, Joe MacIntosh, Sean McClenaghan, Ian Spooner, and Kay Thorne. Finally, the conference would not have been financially viable if not for the largesse of our corporate sponsors, including the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of New Brunswick, the New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources (Geological Surveys), EnCana Corporation, and PotashCorp (Gold level); the Université de Moncton and Mining Association of Nova Scotia (Silver level); and Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan New Brunswick Division and Xstrata Zinc Canada (Copper level).

The Colloquium will return to Nova Scotia next year, at one of two possible venues; this writer will not put pressure on either potential host by speculating on which will be the lucky winner, but I hope to see many of you there.

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Citation for the Laing Ferguson Award to Nelly Koziel

Nelly Koziel has a long history of commitment to the AGS, starting with the 1997 Nova Scotia EdGEO Workshop in Bridgewater. For the subsequent eleven workshops, she has been responsible for mailing out promotional packages to about 180 schools throughout Nova Scotia, receiving and confirming registrations, documenting all registration fees and tracking expenses, compiling all registration kits and handouts, arranging all meals and accommodation, staffing the registration desk, and attending as the co-ordinator to ensure a seamless operation. Nelly’s efforts are definitely one of the few key reasons why the workshops are still so much in demand.

Helping with the EdGEO workshops is just one small part of Nelly's contributions to AGS. The lifeline of the Society is its newsletter, one of the best published by any geoscience society. From 1998 to 2001, when Jennifer Bates was Editor, and from 2005 to the present, with John Shimeld as Editor, Nelly has been responsible for all the word-processing and layout of the newsletter. This is not only a demanding job but one with a rigorous time-table.



Grant Ferguson presents the Laing Ferguson (no relation) Distinguished Service Award to Nelly Koziel of GSC Atlantic. Photograph: Sue Johnson.

A major source of income for the Atlantic Geoscience Society is the sale of publications. For many years, this was handled by Peter Wallace. It is a daunting task, so when Peter decided to resign as distribution manager in late 2006, AGS Council was concerned about maintaining continuity of service. Fortunately, Nelly volunteered to take over and has handled all invoicing and mailing for over two years. As with all the responsibilities that she accepts, everything runs smoothly with nary a glitch. In addition, Nelly staffed the AGS booth at "Halifax 2005" (the joint annual meeting of the Geological Association of Canada - Mineralogical Association of Canada), the 2003-2008 annual conferences of the Nova Scotia Association of Science Teachers, the 2007 and 2008 Gem and Mineral Shows in Parrsboro, and the 2008 AGS Colloquium. All were very successful endeavours, generating income, publicity and goodwill for the Society.

Since the early years of the "Beyond the Last Billion Years" talks series in 2004, Nelly has been responsible for the sales of publications and refreshments. She is helping the treasurer of the AGS Education Committee by taking care of all bank transactions and keeping detailed records. And, lastly, Nelly

played a significant role in organizing the 2008 AGS Colloquium in Dartmouth. She arranged and participated in site visits to various hotels in the Halifax area, oversaw the registration process, made over 200 copies of the program and abstracts volume (no mean feat considering it was 86 pages long), and transported several truckloads of supplies to the meeting, including the AGS birthday cake. These activities collectively represent a major commitment to the Atlantic Geoscience Society and make Nelly Koziel a deserving recipient of the Laing Ferguson Award.

[Nelly Koziel would like to thank the Society members who nominated her for this award.]

Citation for the Gesner Medal to John Waldron

The Gesner Medal is awarded to "a person who has, through their own efforts (maps, publications, memoirs, etc.) developed and promoted the advancement of geoscience in the Atlantic Region in any field of geology and whose contribution has made an impact beyond the immediate Atlantic Region". John Waldron's work has been and continues to be exemplary in light of these criteria.

John completed his undergraduate degree in geology at Cambridge University (1974-1977) and his graduate studies at the University of Edinburgh (1977-1981), where his thesis project was on the geology of the Antalya Complex, southwestern Turkey. He came to Memorial University of Newfoundland in January 1981 for post-doctoral research in western Newfoundland, and joined the Geology Department at Saint Mary's University later that same year. He taught sedimentary and structural geology, field methods, and introductory geology at SMU until 2000, when he moved to the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. However, he continues to do field work in Atlantic Canada, which remains first in the list of his research interests on his University of Alberta website; for example, he led a highly successful field trip looking at the Cobequid-Chedabucto fault zone as part of the Halifax 2005 GAC-MAC meeting.

John's research deals mainly with deformed sedimentary rocks from both sedimentary and structural perspectives; although he has refused to be classified into either camp, he admits to being a "deformed sedimentologist". He is well known nationally and internationally for his work in western Newfoundland and in the Meguma terrane of Nova Scotia, and his work is widely referenced. In addition to numerous articles published in peer-reviewed journals, many more are in the form of government publications, maps, and abstracts; John has also been a major contributor to AGS meetings for over 25 years.

John's most significant contributions can be grouped into three major categories:

1. Unravelling the stratigraphy and structural architecture of the Paleozoic Laurentian continental margin and foreland basins of the Appalachians in western Newfoundland and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. John was a major contributor to the Lithoprobe East program during the 1980s and 1990s, and his recognition of a “triangle zone” in seismic data interpretations is well documented in papers in CJES in 1993 and 1998 on which he is the lead author. This work led to collaboration with Cees van Staal that resulted in the ground-breaking recognition (published in *Geology* in 2001) of the Dashwoods block as a piece of Laurentia that detached and rejoined to produce the Taconic Orogeny. This recognition explains Grenvillian outliers throughout the Appalachian Orogen, and provides an explanation for the previously enigmatic problem of how Iapetus Ocean could open and close more than once.
2. Understanding the role of transpression and transtension in the evolution of the Late Paleozoic Maritimes Basin, Atlantic Canada. John’s detailed work with his students in the Carboniferous sedimentary basins that lie north and south of the Cobequid-Chedabucto Fault Zone led to a major new understanding of the complex history related to the dextral interaction between Avalon and Meguma terranes. Although this work continues, a major paper on the geology of the Stellarton graben in 2004 (*Geological Society of America Bulletin*) summarized his earlier insights. This work has led also to exciting and innovative interpretations of the role of evaporite withdrawal in preservation of trees in the Joggins section, published in *Geology* in 2005.

3. Details of stratigraphy and structure in the Meguma Group of southern Nova Scotia. John’s work (1992, CJES and NSDNR Open File Reports) on the Meguma Group led to new understanding and redefinition of the Halifax - Goldenville transition zone, and its linkages to sea-level changes. His discovery of fossils in the upper part of the Goldenville Formation on Tancook Island (published with Brian Pratt in 1992) was a milestone in understanding the depositional environment, age, and provenance of the Meguma Group. John’s work on the Meguma Group is on-going, with current collaborations focused on the significance of trace fossils and detrital zircon dating.

Over the years, John’s work has provided us all with many new insights about the geology of Atlantic Canada. In addition, with his careful work and attention to detail, John has been and continues to be an excellent role model for numerous students. For the above reasons, it is my honour to nominate John Waldron for the Distinguished Scientist Award (Gesner Medal) of the Atlantic Geoscience Society.

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John Waldron of the University of Alberta (left) accepts the plaque for the AGS Distinguished Scientist Award (Gesner Medal) from Grant Ferguson. Photograph: Sue Johnson.



SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Does your group require a little extra money to get a project or event on the go?

Does your project fall within the mandate of **Atlantic Geoscience Society (AGS)?**

If so, we may be able to provide you with that extra bit of funding you need!

The Products Committee of the AGS is currently accepting loan or grant applications for projects that communicate ideas about the Earth and earth sciences.

For more information or to download the application, please visit the AGS website:

<http://ags.earthsciences.dal.ca/ags.php>

Or

You may contact a member of the **Products Committee**

Rob Raeside (rob.raeside@acadiiau.ca)
 David Keighley (keig@unb.ca)
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REGIONAL NEWS AND UPDATES

Acadia University

Approximately 25 Acadia students and faculty attended the Atlantic Geoscience Colloquium at Moncton on February 6-7. The Acadia students were particularly conspicuous at the conference, showing up in the technical sessions, browsing the posters, and generally having a great time. Stephanie Anderson and Jean-Luc Pilote both gave talks, Stephanie's based on her M.Sc. research, and Jean-Luc on his honours thesis work at the Université de Moncton. Tim Collins, Edwin Escarraga, Tamara Moss, Pizye Nankamba and Meredith Roik presented posters. Congratulations to Tamara who won the Graham Williams best poster award, and to Edwin, who was a runner-up in this category!

A group of students from Acadia attended the APICS Environmental Science conference at Fredericton on March 27-28. Talks were given by Jennifer Herrick, Claire McIntyre, Emily Nadolny on their honours thesis research and by Sam Edmonds and Emma Vost on their M.Sc. work. Sarah Haverstock took home the "best undergraduate student presentation" award for her presentation on "Photo-oxidation of Dissolved Organic Carbon by Ultra-violet Radiation in Freshwater Lakes", which includes a \$200 prize. Four students also attended the Fourth Annual Atlantic Region Sustainable Campuses Conference this year.

In March, Sandra Barr and graduate students Edwin Escarraga and David Swanton attended the annual conference of the Northeastern Section of the Geological Society of America in Portland, Maine. Edwin presented a poster on his work on granites in the Antigonish Highlands, and Sandra gave a talk on her work on rocks sampled decades ago by the submersible Alvin in the Gulf of Maine. She also co-chaired a session on Ganderian terranes of the Appalachian orogen, and was co-author on a talk on detrital zircon data from Ganderia in that session.

David McMullin writes from Bermuda in the middle of his sabbatical leave with Class Afloat. He reports that it has been a very rewarding though challenging experience. In the course of three months aboard the Polish tall ship "Fryderyk Chopin" he has sailed from Brazil and has taught 3 courses (Intro Geology, Natural Disasters, and General Oceanography). Classes have just come to an end and exams will take place during his last leg from Bermuda to Lunenburg. David is very pleased with how the students have done. The environment is a challenging one and there are new issues virtually every day. But coping with those challenges has reminded David that teaching and learning is not just about Powerpoint lectures, museum-quality specimens and the latest technological gizmo. The link between student and teacher forged by the challenges aboard more than compensates for

the lack of technology. David reports that this all-but-overwhelming experience will influence how he teaches for a long time to come.

David returns on July 1 when he'll take the reins back from Christa Pufahl, his replacement during his sabbatical. Christa did a great job covering labs in the Earth History and Stratigraphy/Sedimentology courses, and we hope that we can keep her with us in the future. Although Christa is sad to finish her contract she hopes to continue her involvement in the department.

Nelson O'Driscoll is continuing collaborations with researchers from St. Francis Xavier University, IPIMAR, Environment Canada, and the BioDiversity Research Institute on the fate of mercury and green house gases in wetlands and salt marshes. Nelson's students Emma Vost and Stephanie Rogers were both awarded Alexander Graham Bell NSERC CGS scholarships this year, and Jillian Hanmore and NSERC USRA.

Peir Pufahl looks forward to his promotion to Associate Professor on July 1. He's been busy as the acting Chair of the Canadian Sedimentology Research Group and as a newly appointed Associate Editor for Marine and Petroleum Geology. Peir's M.Sc. student, Stephanie Anderson, defended her thesis on April 6. Stephanie did a fantastic job and the department wishes her well as she returns home to Chicago to start her career. Peir looks forward to the warm weather of Bermuda, where he will lead a group of eleven undergraduate students on his biennial carbonate sedimentology field course in early May.

Cliff Stanley was selected as the CIM Distinguished Lecturer for the Geology Division this year, and has already given lectures in Fredericton, Québec City, and Rouyn/Noranda, and Saskatoon. He will be giving lectures in Thunder Bay and Campbell/Red Lake, Winnipeg, and Thompson in April. In addition, he was selected as the AusIMM (New Zealand Chapter) International Visiting Speaker, and so will be giving lectures and short courses at the Universities of Auckland and Otago, at the GNS Science (Geological Survey of New Zealand), and the Waihi, Globe-Progress and Macraes Au Mines, on the North and South Islands in May.

Peir Pufahl
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Beyond the Last Billion Years 2009 Talk Series

April 15, 2009, 7:30 p.m.
Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History
1747 Summer Street
Halifax, NS
<http://museum.gov.ns.ca>

“From Ice Age to Climate Change: A Natural History of the Shubenacadie Waterway” by Dr. Edward (Ned) King of the Geological Survey of Canada (Atlantic)

Dino Daze

July 12, 2009
Fundy Geological Museum
Parrsboro, NS
<http://museum.gov.ns.ca/fgm>
1-866-856-DINO

Come join the staff at the Fundy Geological Museum for our annual Dino Daze. Activities include guided beach tour, dino dig, games, chalk drawing, and much more. Bring your own lunch or enjoy T-Rex toes, swamp water, ice cream and cake. Cost is general admission to museum (10 am to 4 pm).

Nova Scotia's Gem and Mineral Show

August 14-16, 2009
Lion's Arena, King Street
Parrsboro, NS
<http://museum.gov.ns.ca/fgm>
1-866-856-DINO

This is the only show in the Maritimes celebrating our rich mineral and fossil heritage. Dealers from across Canada and the US bring gems, jewellery, minerals, fossils, lapidary supplies, beads and ores for sale and display.

Walk the shores with a geologist, listen to a lecture, watch the demos, join a workshop, browse the booths and go home with a treasure!

8th Bay of Fundy Science Workshop

May 26-29, 2009
Acadia Centre for Estuarine Research (ACER)
Acadia University
Wolfville, NS
<http://www.bofep.org/workshop2009.htm>

If you have an interest in the Bay of Fundy and in the

understanding, sustainable use, conservation and restoration of its natural resources you will want to attend this workshop. The workshop will be of particular interest to scientists, graduate students, community and First Nations groups, non-governmental organizations, governmental agencies, those who manage and use the resources, and indeed all groups or individuals interested in the Bay of Fundy. An invitation is also extended to science educators who wish to learn more about the Bay's ecosystems and research in the region.

24th International Applied Geochemistry Symposium (IAGS 2009)

June 1-4, 2009
University of New Brunswick
Fredericton, NB
<http://www.unb.ca/conferences/IAGS2009/>

This biennial Association of Applied Geochemists meeting is co-sponsored by the International Association of GeoChemistry (IAGC) and the International Association of GeoAnalysts (IAG) and will include the North Atlantic Minerals Symposium (NAMS). The meeting will be preceded by 5 professional development workshops to be held on Sunday, May 31st. As well there are 3 pre-meeting field trips (Wednesday, May 27th to Saturday, May 30th) and 3 post-meeting field trips (Friday, June 5th to Monday June 8th) which will be run throughout the Maritimes, leaving from and returning to Fredericton.

GeoHalifax 2009

September 20-24, 2009
Halifax Marriott Harbourfront Hotel
Halifax, NS
www.geohalifax09.ca

The Canadian Geotechnical Society (CGS), the Nova Scotia Section of the Canadian Geotechnical Society and the Canadian National Chapter of the International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH-CNC) invite you to the 62nd Canadian Geotechnical Conference and the 10th Joint CGS/IAH-CNC Groundwater Specialty Conference.

The conference theme - Discover Geotechnique - reflects Halifax's history as a point of discovery for many early Canadians. It also refers to this conference's tradition of providing a continuing forum for discovering new research developments and advancements in geotechnical engineering and hydrogeology.