

NOVA SCOTIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE SESSION 2008-2009

Report of the President

During the past year, members of the Institute have actively engaged in furthering its mandate of promoting science in Nova Scotia. This has been achieved by:

- presenting a monthly program of public lectures given by expert Nova Scotian scientists,
- publishing the peer-reviewed Proceedings of the Nova Scotian Institute of Science,
- providing financial support for Regional Science Fairs,
- providing support for a number of Atlantic Provinces Council on the Sciences (APICS) undergraduate conferences by providing prizes for winning presentations
- maintaining a library
- running the annual scientific writing competition,
- developing and actively maintaining the Institutional web site at www.chebucto.ns.ca/Science/NSIS, with the great help of John Cordes.

During the past year, the lecture program of six public lectures was organized by David Richardson with the help of Ellen Louth and Sean Tibbets. All the lectures were held at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History and the Institute is indebted to the Museum for its continued support. We acknowledge the monthly help of David Christianson. The lectures involved speakers from both Dalhousie University and Saint Mary's University as well as from Wildwood laboratories. Feedback from the forty to fifty members attending each lecture was extremely positive. This was coupled with effective publicity organized by

Sandra Nowlan, resulting in the lectures not only being well-attended, but interviews being requested and broadcast by CBC radio. The programme was as follows:

Monday 6th October 2008

Kenneth Rockwood (Dalhousie University), "Life after 60 – is dementia or Alzheimer's inevitable and/or treatable?",

Monday 3rd November 2008

Anna Metaxas (Dalhousie University), "Hot spots of life in the Deep Sea",

Monday 1st December 2008

Hugh Broders (Saint Mary's University), "Life history and social ecology of Nova Scotian bats",

Monday 2nd February 2009

Veronica Stinson (Saint Mary's University), "How to be a good eye-witness – memory and crime",

Monday 2nd March 2009

Glen Lesins (Dalhousie University), "Research at the top of the world – the changing climate and the International Polar Year",

Monday 6th April 2009

Dick Rogers, (Wildwood Laboratories) "To be a bee or not to be – threats to pollinators and consequences in Nova Scotia",

Monday 4th May 2009 Annual Dinner and AGM

Brian Hall (Dalhousie University) "What Charles Darwin was doing on the 4th of May"

The annual round table was held at the Scotia Bank Conference Theatre, Sobey building, Saint Mary's University on Monday 5th January 2009. The discussion with a panel of experts was on "Uranium and Gold extraction – can it be done safely in Nova Scotia". Short presentations were made by Marcos Zentilli (Dalhousie University), Michael Parsons (Natural Resources Canada), Paul Smith (Acadian Mining), Marc Lamoureux (Saint Mary's University). Questions and a general discussion followed. Over one hundred and fifty people attended the round table which was followed by a reception.

The Annual Dinner and AGM will be held on 4th May and to date 55 members have booked to attend.

Further Details of these NSIS meetings, can be found on the NSIS website.

For the past several years, the Proceedings have been published under the able editorship of James E. Stewart who has maintained a high standard. He has handed over the editorship to Peter Wells having seen the 2008 issue Volume 44 part 2 through to publication. The Institute is indebted to the Editor and to members of the Editorial Board for their services.

The early proceedings of the NSIS have been digitized and are now available for viewing and Dalhousie University, which houses the NSIS library, has agreed to digitize the next six volumes of the proceedings (1886-1910).

The annual Science Writing Competition was organized again this year by Robert Cook. Our congratulations to the two winners in the 2009 NSIS Student Essay Competition:

Gregory Hutton,
MLIS student in the School of Information Management,
Dalhousie University, Halifax,
"Understanding Influence of Scientific Information in the Digital Age:
A Study of the Grey Literature of a United Nations Advisory Group",
and

Benjamin Langer,
BSc student in the Faculty of Science,
Dalhousie University, Halifax,
"The Middle Ground: why we can't save nature for nature"

Gregory and Benjamin have been invited to submit their papers for publication in the NSIS proceedings.

During the year, plans were initiated to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the NSIS in collaboration with the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the Bedford Institute of Oceanography. A small committee has been established to work on the events. In recognition of the forthcoming 150th anniversary of the Nova Scotian Institute of Science, Joerg-Henner Lotze, Director, Humboldt Field Research Institute at Steuben Maine, has offered a scholarship to one member of the Nova Scotian Institute of Science for the forthcoming summer of 2009. This Scholarship will include the cost of tuition, accommodation and meals for a one-week Seminar. The winner of the scholarship will be announced at the AGM.

In other activities, the Institute has again provided financial support to the ten Regional Science Fairs in Nova Scotia, and the Institute cosponsored with the Ecology Action Centre the 2009 Symposium on Sable Island at Saint Mary's University.

In conclusion, members of the Institute are undoubtedly aware that the NSIS mission of presenting and promoting science, especially research, can only be achieved by continued activity on the part of members by serving on Council and by taking part in other activities of the Institute. As with all similar volunteer organizations, there is a need for younger members to become active as older members retire. The Institute has a long and proud history and will celebrate 150 years of promoting science to Nova Scotians in 2012. Few other Canadian organizations can boast this track record.

Finally, I thank all members of Council for their diligence and hard work during the past year.

Respectfully submitted,
David H.S. Richardson
April 28, 2009