

The Atlantic Geoscience Society and the Photographic Guild of Nova Scotia - a collaboration 14 years strong

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Following the production of the Atlantic Geoscience Society (AGS) book, *The Last Billion Years* and considering the significant input into that project of several members of the Photographic Guild of Nova Scotia (PGNS), there was enthusiasm in 2000 for a continuing collaboration between the two societies. Proponents agreed that this should take the form of an annual competition within PGNS sponsored by AGS, as well as an annual field trip. The inaugural competition was held in 2000 and the winner claimed "The Atlantic Geoscience Society Award". The rules for the competition stipulated that the subject matter could include "rocks, sediments, geological processes ..., minerals and fossils, as well as landscapes." In contrast to some other PGNS competitions, the rules encouraged human interest, such as people for scale, quarries and building stones. The judging takes place at a regular PGNS meeting: as per convention, there are three judges, at least one of whom is a member of AGS. By 2003 it was clear that most entries were of images of the geology of the southwestern USA, a favourite hunting ground for PGNS members. It was decided therefore to institute a second award, *The Last Billion Years Award* (LBY), which was first competed for in 2004. If the overall winning image is a depiction of the geology of Atlantic Canada, it claims both awards; if not, then the best image claims the AGS Award and the best Atlantic image wins the LBY award. The competition is now in its 15th year. In addition to the completion, an annual field trip for the PGNS has been run under the aegis of AGS. The first trip was focussed on the Halifax area, and one was to Kejimikujik Seaside; but otherwise most have focussed on the diverse and colourful rocks around the Minas Basin. The trips generally attract between 10 and 30 people, with some participants more interested in the geological story and others distracted from the science by the attractive surroundings. The benefit of the interaction for the photographers is that they have an incentive to chase images from a somewhat unusual angle (for them); and the benefit for AGS is that submitted images are available for use in its educational projects or products such as *The Last Billion Years*.