

Rockhound Gemboree turns 52



By Sara Gottardi

On a sunny and hot Thursday, July 30 the Rockhound Gemboree celebrated its 52nd anniversary kicking off this year's festivities at the Bancroft Curling Club and North Hastings Community Centre. A ceremonial ribbon cutting was held before an anxious crowd ready to hunt for treasures. Bancroft and District Chamber of Commerce (BDCC) President, Mike Daly, introduced Hastings County Warden, Rick Phillips. Phillips reminded the crowd that "the Gemboree is one of the top 100 festivals in all of North America." Hastings Highlands' Mayor Vivian Bloom, who was also present for the official opening added that she's "very proud of being a part of the historic Rockhound Gemboree in Bancroft." Bancroft's Mayor Bernice Jenkins thanked the crowd commending organizers on the great job they do each year, and wishing them many more successful years to come. Guide books for the Bancroft and surrounding areas were available for \$20, created and distributed by the BDCC. Mineral Collecting Field Trips, the Artisans Junction at the Old Train Station downtown, and Nature Discovery Tours were available to everyone.

Vendors participating in the show came from all over the world. Many, like Tim Noyes-Brown of Kulu Trading have been taking part in the show for more than 10 years. Wendy and Frank Melanson who own and run Hawthorneden have been setting up shop at the event for 30 years.

Taking a total of almost two entire days to prepare, vendors and volunteers alike with the BDCC pitched in to help setup for the Gemboree. Dedicated and faithful to partaking in the Gemboree, businesses like, Capilano Rock and Gems as his "parents first did the Bancroft show in 1979 or 1980," Brian Capilano said and now it is his business.

Alberta, Ottawa, Toronto, Kingston, Ancaster, British Columbia, are just a few of the places people have travelled from to take part in the largest, best mineral and rock show in all of North America. There were over 100 vendors combined in and outdoors at this year's Gemboree.