

Treasures under our feet

By Jim Eadie

The geologic specialty of the North Hastings area, which in turn influences the plant biology unique to this area was front and centre at the Limerick Centre on Sept. 24, thanks to the organizing of the Wollaston Limerick Library 'Friends of the Library' group. Friends of this library raise money throughout the year, including their giant annual summer book sale, to sponsor free presentations of interest for the community. These presentations in the past have included topics ranging from astronomy to small-scale beekeeping. This time Mark and Sandra Bramham of Greenmantle Farm described the rocks and minerals found in this area, along with samples of the minerals and the plants that thrive in their presence.

'This area is so special because of the calcite abundance,' said Bramham. Ancient sedimentary rock formed from old lake bottoms is covered and then compressed which causes high pressure and temperatures. The rock is converted to calcites, of which the best known to the amateur would be marble. Calcites can be pink, white, opaque, and formed into crystals.

Next, pressures force the earth's crust to break, and push up into the old mountain ranges that used to be present in this area, followed by weather and glacial erosion which eventually exposed the bands of calcite at the surface.

Bramham brought samples of calcium loving plants that would thrive more in these areas, such as the maidenhair fern, leather bush, wild leeks, trilliums, or bellflower.

Bramhams are also involved in a project to 'Save the Red Oaks' project on Crown land in the Wilberforce area near their farm.

These trees are located on a high ridge where they have never been logged before, and are presently threatened by proposed logging operations.

On Oct 15, the friends of the library are planning an about line dancing, which will include a history of the popularity of line dancing, followed by a demonstration with an opportunity for audience participation. Further information can be obtained by calling the Wollaston and Limerick Library at 613-337-5183.