



**AGS Laing Ferguson Award – 2014
Ian Spooner**

It is my pleasure to introduce Dr. Ian Spooner as the recipient of the Laing Ferguson Award of the Atlantic Geoscience Society. The criteria for the award state, “This Award shall be given in recognition of exceptional and altruistic contributions to the Atlantic Geoscience Society and/or to foster public appreciation of Atlantic geoscience over a long period of time.” Ian has been a member of the Society for almost 20 years, since his arrival in the Maritimes, and has been a stalwart supporter of the Society and its goals throughout that time. This award recognises his dedication to the Society and his commitment to ensuring the smooth functioning of its operations. It rests on three pillars: his commitment to the communication of ideas and information about earth science to the professional geoscience community and the general public; his willingness to work relentlessly behind the scenes to ensure the smooth operation of the Society; and his rather liberal application of decorum and procedure to ensure the job gets done.

Ian Spooner is first and foremost an earth scientist, albeit perhaps rather close to the uppermost edge of “Earth Science”. His commitment to mucking around on the water has ensured that he and his students have dredged up glacial and post-glacial history of lakes and ice fields from northern British Columbia to western Newfoundland, but much of his work has been in small lakes and the coastlines of Nova Scotia. A perusal of the thesis titles of the 17 MSc and 38 Honours theses he has supervised reveals a wealth of study on limnology, climate change and geomorphology in our region. He has unfailingly insisted that his students present their work at events like AGS colloquia – no fewer than 60 of his 126 publications of all types involve his students in the form of posters and papers submitted to the colloquium or the AUGC. Add to that the many courses he teaches at Acadia University, some with as many as 280 students in them, and it is evident that a generation of earth scientists are being well educated in all aspects of surficial geology and the geological history of the past 15,000 years.

Ian is perhaps better known to many of you as the go-to guy to get technical problems solved. At the AGS colloquia, he has for many years been the source of equipment and personnel – data projectors, computers, duct tape, cables, speaking accessories, more duct tape, student volunteers, poster displays, not to mention sound equipment for the after-dinner entertainment. He not only tends the equipment necessary for our conferences, but has organized the volunteer student staff for many of them too, including instruction about how to run a session, how to handle nervous speakers who only know how to say “Next slide” and (in the days when it was necessary) instruction about how to replace bulbs or retrieve stuck slides from slide projectors. There is a reason why Ian has the biggest lab and storeroom at Acadia – he has the most stuff. But he willingly shares both his equipment and his expertise with the community.

Finally, I must acknowledge Ian’s techniques to ensure things get done. Not for him the straightjacket of Roberts Rules of Order. An agenda? That’s only a rough guide to what we are going to talk about today. Instead, when Ian is running a meeting or organizing an event, we have learned to expect a tirade of topics in a just-in-time succession, but we can be assured that he has thought of all the outcomes and worked out the best way to get his plans carried out. His technique, while not appropriate for the faint of heart, is obviously successful, for he repeatedly gets called upon to organize all sorts of groups – at least four AGS colloquia in Wolfville, the technical aspects of most of the AGS colloquia in Halifax, Moncton, and Saint John over the past two decades, the special events committee for the GAC-MAC conference in Halifax in 2005, and outside of AGS, numerous sports and athletic activities at Acadia University.

In summary, Ian Spooner has exhibited prowess as a scientist and educator, as a willing and helpful organizer for our collective operations, and as a man who has a distinctive flair for getting things done, if done his way. And I haven’t even mentioned his talents for entertainment whether those are in the telling of stories or the strumming of the banjo. It is capable and productive people like him who have advanced the aims of our organization. The Atlantic Geoscience Society should be thankful for his attention, and I am therefore happy to present to him the Laing Ferguson Award in recognition of his exceptional and altruistic contributions to the Society over a long period of time.