

Museum collects legendary '\$100,000' rock

Sure, the boulder recently put on display outside the Bulkley Valley Museum looks neat.

Even so, it's hard to imagine that anyone would shell out \$100,000 for it. But they did -- sort of.

By Mitch Moneo
The Interior News

Back in August, 1967, Smithers' prospector Peter Bland uncovered the rock while searching for copper near Morrison Lake northeast of Babine Lake.

Within three days of discovery the option to the boulder, along with the property where it rest, was purchased by a mining company for \$100,000.

"That was a lot of money back in those days," Bland recalls. "It was exceptionally large. Usually property options went for \$5,000 or \$6,000. Even by today's standards options only go for around \$10,000."

Bland says the area, called Hearne Hill, was extremely active, with a number of large mining companies looking to get a piece of the action.

"It was a special breccia," Bland says of the mineral components of his discovery. "There was no known breccia like that in the Babines."

The uniqueness of the rock, combined with the fact that the Granisle mine had just gone into production turned the heads of speculators.

Smithers geologist Tony L'Orsa worked for Texas Gulf, the company who purchased the property.

"Pete likes to make jokes about the company that paid \$100,000 for a rock," L'Orsa says of the purchase. "But that's wasn't the point."

"It was thought to be an outcrop and it was extremely rich in copper. The signs were just excellent. There was a lot of competition for the property."

However, the signs just didn't point to a motherlode. Six months and about \$250,000 worth of exploration later Texas Gulf dropped the property.

It was picked up by Canadian Superior who did some percussion mining and found nothing, according to Bland. Then Granvy, who eventually consolidated and became Noranda, held the option, although Bland says they never did any work.

Over 20 years later in 1989, Bland and his partner Dave Chapman re-staked the property.

Bland says he is convinced a copper pipe exists somewhere near where he found the boulder.

"Everyone concentrated on a little area," he says of ground not yet explored. "We're waiting for someone to become interested enough."

Bland never received anything other than praise and maybe a pay increase for his discovery, because he didn't own an interest in the property.

And the boulder has yet to yield anyone untold fortunes.

But it is rich in history. "We think it is a great addition to our collection," says Leah Hubensky, curator at the Bulkley Valley museum.

Hubensky says the museum plans to have a permanent exhibit on mining in the northwest and the boulder fits well into the theme.

"It's a real interesting rock," she says of the boulder's unique features. "We were told geologists will make a bee-line over to it to see it."



Prospector Peter Bland swings the \$100,000 boulder into position at its new home on the grounds of the BV Museum.

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SURREY

Tyrant bosses ston on in 'kinder' work

Associated Press

STAMFORD, Conn. — When
General Electric said it would no
longer put up with overbearing
bosses, workers elsewhere heard
echoes of their own employers'
words.

GE chairman John Welch told
shareholders he envisioned a
kinder, gentler workplace where
front-line employees are as impor-
tant as top-level managers.

His new style is shared by
several large corporations that also
try to keep managerial tyrants from
abusing workers.

Eastman Chemical Co., a division
of Eastman Kodak, has stopped
evaluating employees and encour-
ages managers to act as "coaches"
rather than bosses.

Xerox Corp. lets workers evalu-
ate their managers' performances.

And Champion International
Corp. asks workers at its paper
mills to draft their own plans for
productivity and management.

Whether called "collaborative
management," "teamwork," or
"commitment-based manage-
ment," the goal is similar: Trying
to boost productivity.

"This method works because of
the energy and the brains of people
who are working on a specific job,"
said Andrew Sigler, chairman of
Stamford-based Champion.

"When they want to, they can
find better ways of doing it and
becoming more productive."

Welch said in the company's
1991 annual report that GE will no
longer tolerate the kind of manager
who "forces performance out of
people rather than inspires it."

In tough economic times, he
said, GE "cannot afford manage-
ment styles that suppress and
intimidate."

The bluntness of Welch's
message surprised some because,
while many companies preach
about letting employees make
decisions, most have been unable
to practise it at all company levels.

"Most companies in general still

Granisle's copper mine pulling up stakes June 12

Business Reporter

The Bell copper mine at Granisle
in northern B.C. has exhausted its
ore reserves and will close June 12,
owner Noranda Minerals Inc. said
yesterday.

The open-pit mine has produced
1.2 million short tons of copper
concentrate since it began opera-
tion in 1972.

The mine's 260 full-time
employees will be cut to a crew of
approximately 25, who will be
responsible for overseeing the
property's phase-out.

"We are making every effort to

ensure that all employees get the
counselling, job search, relocation
and training assistance they need
to find a new job," said acting mine
manager Ross McArthur.

An industrial adjustment
committee — made up of manage-
ment and unionized employees,
and government representatives —
has been in place at the mine since
March 1991 and is handling
assistance to laid-off employees.

BRITISH COLUMBIA TELEPHONE COMPANY ORDINARY DIVIDEND

Notice is hereby given that a quarterly divi-
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Corporate Secretary

Burnaby, B.C.
February 18, 1992

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