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**CHAMBER OF MINES**  
*of Eastern British Columbia*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****DATE: March 15, 1999****CONTACT: CHAMBER OF MINES OF EASTERN BC****PHONE/FAX (250)352-5242****SLOCAN GEMSTONES MAIN TOPIC AT CHAMBER OF MINES BANQUET**

NELSON, BC--The annual banquet of the Chamber of Mines of Eastern BC will be held March 20th at the Heritage Inn, Hume Room, Happy Hour 5:00pm, Dinner at 6:00pm. Guest speakers will be Mr. Jim Laird of Anglo Swiss Resources, who will outline progress on Anglo's new gemstone discoveries in the Slokan Valley. Anglo Swiss has been active in the Slokan Valley for several years, first discovering significant quantities of gem quality sapphires, and later gem quality garnets. In 1998 another gem mineral, iolite was discovered.

Anglo Swiss recently showcased their garnet and iolite gemstones at North America's largest gem show held annually in Tucson, Arizona, where they were compared with the world's best. "Dealers shown the company's gems unanimously remarked on the unique colour and high brilliance of the finished gemstones."

The Gemological Institute of America has requested information and photographs, and expressed interest in publishing an article on the Slokan gemstones, and the company has been approached to provide a comprehensive gemstone display at the new Pacific Mineral Museum opening in Vancouver this summer.

The Kootenays have not traditionally been known for gemstones, but clearly these new discoveries are putting the Slokan Valley 'on the map'. At a time when the mining industry is struggling, the discoveries offer another kind of target for prospectors and new hope for a significant (environmentally friendly) economic enterprise in our area. Phone Dennis @352-5242 for more details.