



# Preserving Canada's Nuclear Heritage NEWSLETTER

# No. 8

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Deep River, ON

## In Memorium: Michael Stephens (1948-2021)



### The Society Executive

It was with great sadness that the Society had to inform the members that Michael Stephens, the driving force behind the formation the Society and President for the entire period since its formation, passed away suddenly on June 22, 2021. Jim Ungrin, the Vice-President, stepped in to serve as Acting-president until the Society's Annual General Meeting (AGM) on October 13.

Following the AGM Morgan Brown, who with Michael Stephens had been an early force in the formation of the Society, agreed to assume the position of President and Chair and David Cox agreed to serve as Vice President for the coming year.

A new Director, Bruce Heinmiller, was elected at the AGM and will serve along with returning Directors Tom Alburger, Don Barrington, Sourena Gole-sorkhi, Allan Symons, and Jim Ungrin.

### Society Lease Extension

We are pleased to report that AECL has generously agreed to extend the lease of the Society at our present location, 51 Poplar Street in Deep River for three more years. This extension, together with the significant improvements to the building including a new roof and the installation of a large double door to allow entry of larger artifacts, assure us of a home until at least November 2024.

### Collection Continues to Grow

Despite the complications that Covid-19 has brought, the collection of artifacts continues to grow during the year. We are now reaching a point where there are growing concerns for space to store and display additional large donations that are expected to come with further decommissioning activities across the country.

Over sixty physical artifacts have been received to date in 2021 bringing the total to just over 550. The number of books and other documents has also grown and now numbers more than 1730 (including 1530 book titles and pamphlets) while the number of catalogued, hard copy photographs (mostly generated by AECL) now exceeds 1500.

The Society continues to seek donations from the nuclear industry all across Canada.

### Video-taping of Interviews

A major activity that the Society has undertaken is the video-taping of interviews with nuclear pioneers. This is an activity that should have been undertaken 15-20 years ago before many of the initial group of nuclear pioneers passed on. Unfortunately, neither the organization nor the facilities were set up to do so. To date ten interviews have been completed with researchers well into their 90s in age and several more are slated in the near future. Alexander Stephens, the son of Michael, our former president, has professional training in the audio-visual field and

the appropriate equipment. He is assisting the Society, in part as a continuation of his father's legacy.

The Pioneer Retrospectives section of our website ([www.nuclearheritage.com](http://www.nuclearheritage.com)) continues to grow. Judith Millar, a Society member living in Calgary and an author by profession, has played a lead role in expanding this section. The Society continues to encourage contributions to this section and the "People" section which features group photographs.

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### Open Houses Resume

Although the collection the Society holds has grown dramatically over the past several years, the number of active members available to keep the museum open for visitors has not. As a result, the collection can only be viewed by appointment or at Open House events. Covid-19 again interfered with these activities but the Society was able to hold two successful Open Houses this fall on Sunday afternoons coinciding with major holidays when additional visitors to Deep River were expected. Future events will continue to be planned in this manner.

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### The NRU Repair/Inspection Tool

One of the recent, large acquisitions of the Society is the exquisitely-engineered repair/inspection tool developed with great urgency in 2009 for the National Research Universal (NRU) reactor.

In May 2009, NRU, a critical player in the world's medical isotope chain, developed a leak in its aging aluminum calandria. The leak occurred 9 m below the deck of the reactor and could only be accessed through a 12 cm diameter tube.

Tooling was developed to inspect, clean, and weld-repair the aluminum calandria wall and remove all foreign material. The tool was supported on a strong-back which was used to allow it to go from a horizontal storage and manufactured position to a vertical position directly above the reactor.

The calandria was successfully repaired and the reactor returned to service in August 2010. The overall length of the tool was almost 14 m and a spare copy was made.

The spare copy, which was never used in the repair and hence was always contamination free, was offered to the Society but was too long to fit into the museum building. CNL then shortened the tool

length to 5.2 m by removing the central (largely-uninteresting section) and the unit was made available early in 2021; however, Covid restrictions delayed delivery to October 28 2021. It will be a featured artifact in a new NRU section being set up in the museum.



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### Recent Visitors

The Society holdings were recently visited by Melissa Guillemette, a reporter from the magazine Quebec Science. Melissa was researching an article on the 1952 and 1958 incidents at NRX and NRU at Chalk River. The cover article was featured in the October/November issue of Quebec Science.