

Oro Valley Historical Society Newsletter

December 2020

MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH!

It's been a LONG 2020! But we are happy to announce that the Oro Valley Historical Society (OVHS) will be having a "round-up" at Steam Pump Ranch. **The Historic Steam Pump Ranch Park will be open for outdoor tours of the property on Saturday, December 12, and Saturday, December 19, from 10 a.m. until noon** (last tour departure). The tour will include OVHS docent guided talks that include an overview of Native Cultures that lived in the area, the Pusch Ranch House, the Steam Pump Building, the Proctor-Leiber House and the Heritage Garden. Due to COVID, the building interiors will NOT be open. Tours will last about 50 minutes. COVID protocols (i.e. masks, temperature, social distancing, health questions) will be necessary for tour participants. Tour groups will be limited to six and will leave approximately every 15 minutes. First come first serve...no reservations. Be sure to dress for the weather. Suggested donation for the tour is \$10 with all proceeds to benefit the continuing programs of the Oro Valley Historical Society. If you still need some holiday gift and seasonal items, the OVHS will have a booth with books, holiday décor and miscellaneous items set-up at the tour check-in site. Look for signs and the booth just south of the Farmer's Market Ramada. The Historic Steam Pump Ranch is located at 10901 N. Oracle Road, Oro Valley. For updates please visit the Oro Valley Historical Society Facebook page and our website ovhistory.org.

ORO VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY WANTS YOU!

We rely on volunteers! That's what we are, a self-sustaining, volunteer organization. Though COVID restrictions have limited our activity, we are looking forward to the day when we can gather and resume our past programs. In the meantime, there are still many ways to get involved. We are starting to conduct outdoor tours at Steam Pump Ranch (see above article). Would you like to greet visitors and/or become a docent? Is gardening your thing? A helping hand in the Heritage Garden is always welcome. Are you a "techie"? We hope to get our collections documented in a more up-to-date format and could use your expertise. If you're the type of person who always has an organizational "to do" list, then you might be able to help with administrative tasks that never seem to go away. We'll find something to do with your spare time! Contact Teri Colmar at teri.colmar@gmail.com.

CURRENT HAPPENINGS

The Society held its annual meeting outside at Steam Pump Ranch on November 12. Board members Sue Chambasian and Henry Zipf Jr. were elected, and Jim Williams gave a brief talk on Steam Pump Ranch and the history of Oracle Road....The Society is still negotiating with the Town regarding an agreement to rent office space at the Ranch...OVHS has purchased the Copper Queen safe to be used in the Tack Room....Proceeds from the Z Mansion event are being used to update the display posters used at Steam Pump Ranch. After that, the remaining Z funds will be designated for our building fund.



Board member Joyce Rychener talking at the
Annual Meeting on November 12th

THE ORO VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS COUNTING ON YOU!

We'll get right to the point! Without our treasured members, the Oro Valley Historical Society (OVHS) would have a difficult path. Support from our members helps us continue lectures and exhibits, maintain/restore/add to our collections and assist with a multitude of other undertakings to adhere to our mission: "to promote research, preservation, education and dissemination of history related to the Greater Oro Valley area".

Our membership year runs from January thru December so it's time to renew for 2021! Membership levels begin at just \$20. You can renew by visiting our website www.ovhistory.org and then hit the link JOIN (scroll to the bottom of the Home page.) We will also send out an email membership renewal reminder with an attached form that can be submitted via mail.

Not interested in membership? Perhaps you might consider a year-end contribution. Needless to say, this has been a "historically" challenging year. We were fortunate to have one fundraiser before the onset of COVID but have been unable to conduct many of the activities that keep us afloat. Contributions are fully tax deductible as OVHS is a self-sustaining volunteer based 501(c) (3) not-for-profit organization. Contributions can be donated on the website www.ovhistory.org. Hit the DONATE button (scroll to the bottom of the Home page or upper right hand corner tab).

We can't learn from history once it's gone. Let the future know that Oro Valley has a long, rich and vibrant history. With your help OVHS will ***"Keep Oro Valley History Alive"***. Many thanks for your continued support!

VOICE YOUR OPINION

The Town of Oro Valley (TOV) Parks and Recreation Division is currently working on Master Plans for area parks. This includes Historic Steam Pump Ranch. The Oro Valley Historical Society (OVHS) believes that some of the plans and proposed activities have strayed from the historic nature of the park and its original intended use (i.e. the outdoor theater). Now is the time to voice your opinion as to the future direction of the park! Will it become a commerce center with unrelated activities taking away from our local history or will it become a historic gem to be treasured for future generations?

Visit the Town of Oro Valley website (www.orovalleyaz.gov) and connect to the tab, located on the home page "Discuss". This will take you to a box labeled "Park Master Plans individual site feedback". Click on the box and

you will be able to post your opinion about Steam Pump Ranch and the other town parks. The ball is in your court...let the town hear from you! **YOU MUST POST BY DECEMBER 18!**

NEWS FROM THE COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE

Walter F. Pusch III (great grandson of George and Mathilda Pusch) donated two Burden Baskets to the Society. Gary Kern has graciously restored two photographs. Peter Lourie, explorer, writer, teacher and historian, and nephew of Henry G. Zipf visited Steam Pump Ranch on December 4th to learn more about his uncle and to tour the ranch. Several members shared information and Peter offered information on his family.



Donations on Display at Annual Meeting: Apache Burden Basket (Walter Pusch), Painting and Carafe (Caryl Thornton), and vintage iron and school bell (Teri Colmar).

JIM KRIEGH AND HIS METEORITE COLLECTION

by

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Jim Kriegh, a founder of the Town of Oro Valley and one of the founders of OVHS, donated a meteorite collection to the Society. Both Jim and I had rather large collections as most were obtained in trades with meteorite dealers here for the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show. We were the only ones in 1998 who had the Gold Basin meteorites, as it had not yet been announced to the general public. Later, we each bought other meteorites and usually we would buy some for each other, so our collections grew. He wanted to donate a representative collection of small and easy-to-handle meteorites to be displayed in the Steam Pump Ranch or an OVHS museum.

The Kriegh collection of small meteorites and slices of different ones is being held as part of the OVHS collection. Sometimes, I have put them on display at the Oro Valley Library and twice did so at the Steam

Pump

Ranch during events. They are available for anyone to see if I am asked to bring them to a meeting or get-together. They are easy to transport as they are in 3 flat boxes and easy to carry.

The story of Jim Krieger's meteorite find is a fun tale, and was a pleasant surprise for him as it was unexpected. At the Desert Gold Diggers monthly meeting in the fall of 1995 which Jim and I and our friend John attended, a meteoriticist from the University of Arizona Dr. David Kring was the speaker. He brought a few meteorites to show us and encouraged us to keep our ears and eyes open for meteorites in the deserts while we were hunting for gold with our metal detectors. The room was full of maybe 100 gold hunters.

During Thanksgiving weekend of 1995, Jim and John and another friend named John decided to go to Gold Basin in northwest Arizona to hunt for gold during the holiday. I was asked to take care of Jim's mail and house and on his desk he left me a map of where they would be. When they returned a few days later, Jim was pretty excited as he showed me some brown, heavy rocks which he said sounded like gold on his metal detector and he wondered if they could be meteorites. I understand that in Gold Basin John and John were teasing him about his "hot rocks" (a term used when Earth rocks containing some native iron or other metals sound like gold nuggets but aren't gold at all) they were finding some and throwing some in the washes. Jim was steadfast in his belief that they were heavier-than-Earth rocks for their size and the sound was too good. In fact, they sounded just like gold nuggets.

After checking with a meteorite hunter he took some to the University of Arizona to Dr. David Kring, our speaker at the Gold Club. David immediately cut one and sure enough they were stone meteorites. David asked Jim if there were any more. Jim replied that "I think they are all over the place in this area." David said if that were true it would really be wonderful, a large strewn field on BLM land where anyone could go hunting for them. That being said, he asked if Jim would be willing to find a couple of friends to help Jim map the field as volunteers for a two-year period in secret so the field would not be disturbed until the map was made of locations that we would find and pick up. Jim asked one friend John and me to be his team. We went for a week every month between September and June, and Jim kept perfect records of the finds. As a civil engineer, he could mark them on a topographic map with accuracy and the U of A was very happy. GPS units were not as common as now so we did it all by hand. At night we weighed the stones, labeled them, and Jim would mark the map in groups. In the two years we ended up mapping a field 12 miles by 5 miles, and it has been expanded since that. After the University finished the study, the meteorites were named Gold Basin by the international nomenclature committee.

I have his original map which I treasure and had laminated. It was a very fun adventure for us all, especially as the find was announced at the 1998 Tucson Gem and Mineral Show. We literally felt like we had 200 new friends as everyone in the meteorite world, hunters, scientists, authors and collectors wanted to meet the U of A civil engineering professor who "accidentally" discovered a major meteorite field. Jim has been given world-wide credit for showing that the average person, women and men, can find a new hobby of either discovering new meteorite finds or just finding meteorites at newly discovered fields. Most of the meteorites that we found during the first two years were returned to us after the U of A studied and documented each one, and some they kept and a few went to the Smithsonian for study.

Many different meteorites have been found by people on purpose hunting on legal government land, dry lake beds and blowholes on any surface since Jim's find. A few others had of course found meteorites before that, but it was pretty unheard of for the metal detecting folks to go on purpose to look for them. Of course, the dry climates all over the world are best for searching as the stone or iron meteorites which fall are well

preserved, not rusting away as in any wet climate or heavily wooded area which makes it hard to hunt. The meteorite folks still come to Tucson and we still get together. Jim is missed by all, and I feel so honored to have been riding his coat tails and able to keep his memory alive to those folks. For the 20th anniversary of his find, 2015, some of us organized a memorial hunt at Gold Basin. Many there were younger or newer hunters who had not even met Jim. They wanted to hear all about him, so afternoons and evenings after the morning hunts all wanted to hear stories and tales about the original Gold Basin find, about Jim and hunting stories. I was so happy to be the one to tell these things to the campers. (John has had health problems and was not present)

This November 2020 is the 25th anniversary. I doubt that anything will be organized with the virus still around, but Jim will be in the thoughts of many around the world. Below, see two links with some photos which will further explain this Gold Basin story. And, I have put my complete photo album on You Tube under Gold Basin Project which you can see. We had NO idea this would turn out to be such a big deal, as we had no knowledge of the huge meteorite world that awaited us. I am very happy that for some reason I took lots of photos. If you see the album you will note that the three of us plus Jim's wonderful dog Kristy were all pictured in the first part, except for our scientist David Kring who came up three times to see what we were doing and how. He would have joined us more but he had duties teaching and researching at the U of A. Later in the photos you can see that after February 1998 it was announced to the public. Many wanted to join us and learn how to hunt there, which was great fun.

The fun part of the Gold Basin find regarding the Desert Gold Diggers is that when this was announced, and Jim and John and I were at a meeting, many there said "Oh yes, we were finding those ugly brown rocks and throwing them away for years!" We said: "Yes, we know!! Every time we saw a dig hole in the ground, we knew we would find a meteorite either thrown near the hole or in a nearby bush!" It was quite funny!

<https://www.meteorite-times.com/james-d-kriegh/>

https://www.meteorite-times.com/Back_Links/2006/November/Meteorite_People.htm



Society members meet with Peter Lourie. Peter is a teacher, writer, photographer, historian, explorer and nephew of Henry G. Zipf. He has traveled the world sharing his experiences through talks and children's

Happy Holidays!!