

Gold Basin Report



by
**Twink
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I had not been to Gold Basin for five or six years, quite a span of time after my frequent trips with John Blennert and the late Jim Kriegh in the years following the 1995 discovery of the strewnfield at Gold Basin.

I found that I was anxious to go there again and try my luck. I had read and heard that the field had been heavily hunted, which is a good thing, as Jim Kriegh had often stated that he was very glad to have been partly instrumental in providing enjoyment for others who wanted to hunt meteorites in a known strewnfield.

I had joined the Old Pueblo Lapidary

Club and a few of the members who owned metal detectors also wanted to try their luck at Gold Basin. At the 2009 Tucson Gem and Mineral Show, I was introduced to a well-known meteorite collector, Fredric Stephan, who also wanted to try his hand at hunting there. They were all invited to my house for a couple of basic lessons in recognizing the way these meteorites sound and look using samples I had found in the past.

In October we all headed up to the area known as Gold Basin, which is about six or seven hours all told from Tucson. The first day we hunted in several areas north and south of the heavily hunted part of the field where the meteorites were first discovered. I knew that meteorites had been found in those places. While scenery of the gorgeous sloping mountains and the Joshua tree studded high desert was enjoyed by all, no meteorites or gold nuggets were found that day.

The next day we moved back into the well-known areas and I had some good luck.

I heard the right sound on my detector of something underground. I used my pick with the strong magnet on it and onto the magnet jumped six nice pieces of a meteorite which probably fit together. I searched around for more pieces but perhaps they had been found by us in the early days or by others since then. I used my water bottle to wash them off and make sure they were in fact pieces of a meteorite. The six pieces weigh 98 g.

After that I crossed the dirt road and was really fortunate. I found a 78 g whole stone sitting under a creosote bush. It is one of the Gold Basins with no obvious cracks and has a nice layer of remaining fusion crust on one side. On the other side one can see with a loupe what appears to be melted bubbled crust with some nickel iron showing through, a very nice Gold Basin specimen. This was encouraging, as it again proved that with all of the hunting some still are elusive and waiting to be found.

The next day I found one more buried near another creosote bush. I always manage



Figure 1. The author with her detector.



Figure 2. Hunter Susette Flemings, Old Pueblo Lapidary Club.

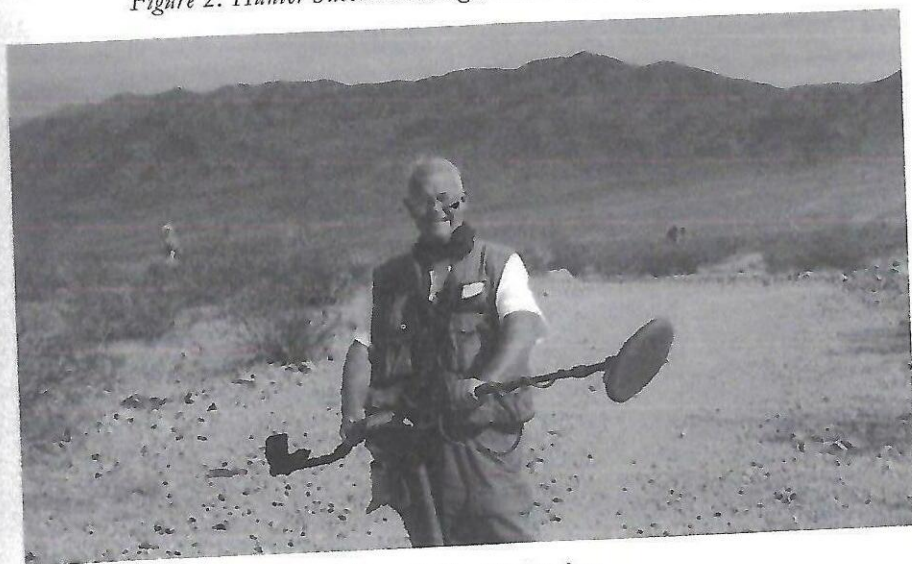


Figure 3. Fredric Stephan.



Figure 4. The author's beautiful find, a cotton top cactus.

to find some beautiful pieces of quartz in different shades of pink, light purple, orange, yellow, red, and coral while hunting at Gold Basin and this time was no exception. As everyone knows one always hopes the white quartz contains some gold!

We took a drive so that I could show the group an area in which the beautiful mounding barrels or cotton tops grow (Latin name is *Echinocactus polycephalus*) and some of us made sure we saw a view of Lake Mead, always a beautiful sight.

I am aware that many hunters often go to Gold Basin, and I am always reminded of one of Jim Krieger's favorite statements: "People will be finding meteorites up there for the next hundred years." I hope everyone continues to do so.

My family moved from Iowa to Tucson when I was two years old. I have been in the Tucson area since then except for three years in Hawaii in the 1970s. Yes, the first Tucson Gem and Mineral Show was held at my elementary school, Helen Keeling Elementary School, in 1955 in the multi-purpose room better known as the cafeteria. I was in the fifth grade. My mother and others ran a refreshment stand and sold hot dogs and other things. I still have several pendants that I bought at that first show, some tumbled stones. Dan Caudle had a set of twins attending Helen Keeling School. Since this show was such a success, it was moved to the old Pima County Fairgrounds near the rodeo grounds on South Sixth Avenue and eventually ended up at the Tucson Convention Center.

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