

Rock, Mineral and Fossil Presentations

In the late 1980s, early 1990s, a member of the Tehachapi Rock and Mineral Society by the name of David Huff used to do Mineral presentations for various Elementary Schools in the Tehachapi area. David was a retired school teacher and he really loved doing these presentations. Dave gave these presentations for free to enlighten the minds of the youths of our community. I was honored to have known him and donated numerous minerals to him for his presentations. Dave passed away in the 1990s due to an illness and the program fell by the wayside.

Early in the 2000s Bob Papac got together with friends and business associates Rick Casey and Chuck Overall and resurrected the program, expanding it from to a Rock, Mineral Specimen, and Fossil presentation that includes hands on touching of things that range from Meteorites, to various Mineral specimens, and Fossils such as Oreodont Skulls, which is sheep sized herbivore that lived in the Big Badlands of South Dakota and the adjacent Nebraska area, Meteorites from Africa, and Mineral Specimens and Fossils from around the world. The kids love it.

We have done presentations throughout the Central California area and have had inquiries from other areas including Southern California, specifically the North San Diego County area. Classes range from Kindergarten to 8th grade, and we've done as many as 7 or 8 presentations over a two day period. Most talks range from about 40-45 minutes, up to multi-hours, depending on the schools wishes. We've even done presentations for Special After School programs such as at Tompkins Elementary in Tehachapi, and a picture of us is featured on their School district flier advertising their program. We really enjoy doing these presentations and we usually start off with Rick asking the students, what's it worth (referring to the numerous tables filled with Rocks, Minerals, and Fossils). Of course, the kids love throwing out their guesses ranging from \$1.00 to Zillions of Dollars, and eventually Rick informs them that its worth NOTHING. This usually stuns them. Then the presentation continues with Rick explaining to the students that all these beautiful items would not have a value UNLESS you have one thing. KNOWLEDGE. Rick, Chuck and I then take turns continuing the talk to explain the various ways that minerals affect our daily lives, their uses, the impact they have on us, and some of the complexities involved in extracting things from them to make various products. Obviously, this varies based on the age group of the students, but all of them really enjoy the presentations.

Often times we try to give out bags of tumbled rocks, fossils, etc. Which the students love. We do this at no expense to the school, and over the years, I've probably given out 10s of thousands of tumbled rocks, numerous fossils, etc. We've really had a great time doing it and we've been soliciting volunteers from the Tehachapi Valley Gem and Mineral Society to assist us in these presentations.