

New shop is a lure for rockhounds

By Kathryn Godsiff
Correspondent

For the rockhounds among us, Nature's Bling on South Elm Street (across the street from U.S. Bank) is a place to meet others of a similar ilk. It's also a great place for those who like to let someone else find the stones, preferring to run their hands through already polished rock, likewise searching for that perfect specimen.

The store has rocks and gemstones from around the world for sale and on display, with owners who have knowledge and passion for the Earth's treasures.

Marc and Jennifer Taylor and their sons Quentin, 10, and Michael, 3, moved to Sisters in February. They brought their expertise in rocks and minerals with them, having honed their skills at a shop in Yachats, Oregon. Marc is a self-confessed "rock nerd" who spent his boyhood searching for beach agates, putting his rock collection on display at school. He is a hands-on guy who learned as he went, listening to experts and looking at a lot of rocks. His eye is now experienced enough to ascertain where many stones are sourced just by looking at them.

Jennifer is a book-learner who is currently studying for her certification in gemology from the International Gemological Society. The qualification will enable her to grade the quality of gemstones in the store, and customers may also bring their own stones in for assessment.

The family travels for several weeks each year, sourcing their stones. They work directly with several mine owners around the world, making sure the stones are ethically sourced. Through an interview process, they are able to ascertain that proper safety procedures are used in the mines and that the end



PHOTO BY KATHRYN GODSIFF

The Taylor family (left to right): Michael, Marc, Jennifer and Quentin.

products are truly handmade.

The Taylors homeschool their boys, enabling them to travel and to attend the large international gem and mineral shows in Tucson and Denver. The boys know their favorite pieces in the store and are happy to lead customers to them.

One of their favorite places is the Dino Dig, located in the courtyard behind the store. For \$5, children of all ages can dig for real fossils, keeping what they find and going home with a description of what they've found.

Nature's Bling isn't just a place to purchase rocks. There is a museum feel to many of the displays, none of which are behind glass. On the back wall is an entire jaw of a prehistoric dinosaur called a Monasaur, sourced from Morocco. Estimated to be between 85-115 million

years old, it was discovered by a Moroccan paleontologist and acquired by the Taylors. It is available for purchase, but most customers will be content with gazing at a perfectly preserved piece of ancient history.

There are giant crystal formations, gems, rare finds and more among the 4,000-plus items in the store. All are able to be touched. Prices are set at close to wholesale due to the Taylor's ability to work directly with the sources.

Local and Northwest artists have gemstone jewelry and art pieces on display.

And if directions to prime rockhounding spots are needed, the Taylors can help. They know of many accessible places that aren't very far from Sisters. Nature's Bling is located at 208 S. Elm St. and can also be found on Facebook.

Sisters author honored for parenting book

Local author Edie Jones has just been recognized as an IPPY Award Winner for 2017 in the 21st Annual Independent Publisher Book Awards for her book, "Raising Kids with Love, Honor, and Respect: Recipes for Success."

She received the Silver Medal in the Parenting Category. This is no small recognition as this year's contest drew 5,000 entries from the United States, Canada and around the world. "Highlighting Books from Around the World, Sharing Ideas that Can Change the World" is the goal of the effort.

The IPPY medal-winning books will be celebrated on May 30, during the annual BookExpo publishing convention in New York.

Jones has received additional honors including a Gold Award for the Family/Parenting division of the 2015 Living Now Book Awards and a first place in the "Parenting & Family" category of the 2016 Best Book Awards. The Seattle Book Review gave her book 5 out of 5 stars.

"Raising Kids with Love, Honor, and Respect: Recipes

for Success" is laid out to make it easy to find information for a specific age. It is an interactive book, offering "recipes" to be tried with each chapter. Readers are also encouraged to cut out the duplicate set of recipes in the back of the book to make them handier to use. Since every child is different and each environment is different, no one resource can cover every single situation. However, Jones' book has practical advice that can be used in some way with all kids.

Jones earned her M.A.Ed. from Oregon State University.

Her foundation for success with kids is "give them lots of love when they need it and (leave them be) in-between." She has practiced this in raising her four accomplished children and in her other activities owning and running a summer camp for children, working in the Girl Scout movement, or being a driving force behind "Together for Children" for 21 years.

In addition to writing this first book, Edie is also a freelance writer for *The Nugget*, the *Bend Nest* and the blog "A Fine Parent."

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