

# NYSSA GATE CITY JOURNAL

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Thunderegg Capital

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## Nyssa Newcomer Has Been A Rockhound For Over 40 Years

By Alan Abbey

On a shelf in the living room of John Stewart's Nyssa home sits a glistening geode with a clock set inside it, which he built. To its right sits a dark blue piece of petrified dinosaur bone. Stewart points to the yellow chips sprinkled about the surface of the bone and says, "They're uranium. When they first found the dinosaur bones they were going for uranium."

Before his visitor can respond, Stewart wheels to his left and commands the visitor to pick up a craggy brown rock. The visitor responds and is surprised at the unexpected weight. "Its pure copper ore," Stewart explains.

Stewart continues to show his visitor the numerous rocks he has collected in his 40 years of rockhounding. Finally, the visitor gets in a question. "How did you get started rockhounding?"

Stewart pauses a second before answering.

He used to take a deaf mute rockhounding and eventually became more and more interested in it himself. He used to fish and rock hound on alternate weekends. After a while, the fishing became less and less frequent and rockhounding more and more frequent. He finally joined a club—and was hooked.

He finishes the story. "If you don't watch out the rocks get acquainted with you," he warns. "They each have a different beauty."

He tells about his background. He was born in La Grande and lived in Bend for many years where he worked for the Central Oregon Tile Company. His rockhounding brought him to Arizona. In the Phoenix area he developed Rock Park—a huge park devoted to rocks, gems and minerals. It had small castles, bridges and moats built from Western gems and rocks. It had a huge display of polished rocks and jewelry. There was one display of plume agates from Madras,

Oregon, which Stewart remembered especially. "Charles Chapman, a millionaire and rock collector dropped \$1,000 on the table. I was afraid because if I touched it he'd take the display. He came in for a whole year and kept offering me \$1,000 in \$100 bills." Little mineral flowers grow inside plume agates and slices of the rocks appear to have little flower gardens in them. But the delicate bouquets and arrangements are completely natural.

Stewart let Rock Park go and went back to Bend. One of his first trips to Nyssa was for the first Thunderegg Days. "I didn't want to set up a table. I just wanted to take it easy and go on the rock hunts, but friends of mine knew I was around and set up a table of my stuff." He laughed as he remembered the trick that kept him from going rockhounding.

Four years ago he moved to Nyssa. "I came to Nyssa because no one can raise tomatoes in Bend," he says. Laughing, he points to the long rows of large tomato plants in his backyard. "Look over here, the tomatoes are getting into the corn." The seven foot stalks are strong and straight. "Last year the corn was 12 feet high." It was a mock complaint. He seems to have trouble keeping the corn from growing too high.

There were other reasons for moving to Nyssa. He wanted to stay in Oregon so he could continue his fishing, hunting and trapping. He had gone to the Boise rock shows for years and of course, Nyssa is right near the thunderegg beds and much rockhounding.

Stewart has as many stories to tell as he has ammunition boxes full of rocks—an entire garage full. He explains how all-encompassing a hobby rockhounding can be. "I dug quartz crystals during the Battle of the Bulge when I should have been digging foxholes. The guys in my platoon almost

killed me."

Sitting in his cluttered garage are two diamond-tipped rock saws, piles of camping, hunting and trapping gear, tools and two "Tote gotes."

Tote gotes are little three-wheeled motorized vehicles which can just about go straight up a cliff, according to Stewart. One day he was demonstrating them at Rock Park and went straight up one side of a steep incline and over the top. However, the other side was even steeper on the way down. He couldn't jump off without killing himself so he dug his heels into the ground and tried to slow up his perilous descent. When he reached the bottom his heels had been burned off and his shoe soles were smoking.

Almost buried in the garage is a large piece of petrified ginkgo wood—the oldest type of tree in the U.S. and very rare.

For a hobby, rockhounding has come to take up a lot of Stewart's time. "I spend three to four days a week solid sawing and grinding rocks. I spend one day a week hunting rocks. I take in 10-12 shows a year. In the winter I trap and when I get tired of rocks for awhile I go fishing."

Stewart has an amazing amount of curiosity, and it is easy to see how he got drawn so deeply into rocks. "The more you study rocks, the more you study the area. Then you learn the formations and you look at the different forms of the strata. Then you study the Indians who were once on the land. The more you look at it the more you see."

Stewart will be at Nyssa's upcoming Thunderegg Days, August 4 through 8. If you go to see his exhibit, the more you look at it, the more you will see and the more you will learn.

The visitor finally leaves, entranced and dazzled. The visitor also leaves with a piece of petrified California redwood.



THERE WERE NO PARENTS in the entire state of Oregon who could have been more proud of their daughter than Mr. and Mrs. Don Moss were last Friday night. Here they stand at the South Park with Shan, who changed into her gown after the parade through town. Shan and a few other people, including Miss Idaho, Rene Peterson, spoke to the crowd of 200 at the park. Shan thanked everybody who had helped her and spoke of her affection for Nyssa and it's people. Many people gave her gifts. After the short ceremonies and a prayer, the crowd dug into a delicious potluck chicken dinner.

MISS OREGON, SHAN MOSS, just after receiving a bouquet of roses from Henry Schneider, city manager. The presentation of the roses officially began last Friday night's parade and celebration in her honor.

## Adrian School Levy Election on Aug. 10

Voters in Adrian School District #61 will be asked to vote on a serial levy on August 10, with polls open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. The levy will run for a period of six years, and cost the taxpayers of the district an extra 20 cents per \$1,000.00 of assessed evaluation above the 6% limitation as imposed by law.

The purpose of the serial levy is to purchase 8 acres and a nice two bedroom home lying north and adjacent to the present school property. The rationale for the purchase, as explained by Supt. Robert Heppner, has many advantages to the district. They are:

1. Part of the present baseball field lies on this property and could be an area of concern in the future if the district doesn't own the property.
2. It will provide an extra house, giving the opportunity to house an additional employee of the district. Plus, the rent on the house would provide an extra income to the district.
3. The property can provide an area for future expansion - buildings, houses, parking, etc.
4. The acreage can also be utilized for experimental FFA Projects.
5. It could provide an area to house FFA Chapter animals.
6. Due to the fact that this eight acres lies within the boundaries of the Adrian city limits, and with the installation of the new water and sewage system, the value of this property will increase at a rapid rate, making it a good investment for the district.
7. This acreage is the only logical way the district could expand in the future.

For the present price of \$27,500, the Board and Superintendent feel it is an opportune time to purchase the property. Therefore, Superintendent Heppner urges the voters to exercise their constitutional privilege and vote on August 10, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the Adrian Elementary School.

Chip sealing will entail

## Blitz Advertises Nyssa Thunderegg Days

Blitz-Weinhard Company is helping focus attention this Bicentennial Year on community events throughout "Blitz Country" by including information of activities, places and dates inside its bottle caps.

Altogether more than 200 community events, festivals, county fairs, etc., are featured in the unique bottle cap "bill boards" on an estimated 43,000,000 caps in circulation throughout the Northwest this summer and fall.

Included in this different kind of advertising is Nyssa's Thunderegg Days. Inscribed inside the bottle caps, one of which was received Wednesday by the Journal, is "Thunderegg Days, NYSSA, Aug. 4-8."

## County Receives Highway Funds

The State Highway Division has distributed \$14,017,219.73 in highway-user funds to the 36 counties of the state during the period January 1 to June 30, 1976, it was announced today by H. Scott Coulter, state highway engineer.

The allocation is based on the statutory 20 percent, with the appropriation being made to the counties on a monthly basis as a result of legislative action during the 1975 session.

The funds come from the

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## Committee Studies Street Improvements

Members of the Nyssa's Citizens Committee for Involvement who were appointed by Planning Commission Chairman, Carl Burningham, designated priorities for chip sealing to be done under the city's limited maintenance budget.

Mayor Don Oldemeyer headed the group composed of Don Sloggett, Joe Seward, and city manager Henry Schneider. Glenn Marcum, fifth member of the group, could not attend.

The group visited each of 12 proposed street repair areas and discussed construction which will amount to an estimated \$9,568,000. Chip sealing will entail

two coats of fine gravel with an oil binder in each of the selected areas which are:

Fifth Street, between Park and Emison; Third Street south of King; approximately six hundred feet on Locust Avenue; Ninth Street between King and Thompson Avenues; Second Street between Good and the alley; Eleventh Street at Main Street intersection; and a road at the Sewage Treatment Plant.

The Committee deleted sections at the River Park, Post Office Alley and Second Street at the City Shop.

The Committee's recommendations will go to City Council for final approval.

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## Town Crier

By Pat Savage  
I was simply elated at the show of enthusiasm and hometown love and concern demonstrated Friday night for the homecoming of Shan Moss, Miss Oregon. She will have many memories during her reign as Miss Oregon, but one of the warmest and happiest will be knowing that she lives in a small town where people know her by name, kids want her autograph and her townspeople cared enough to give her their fullest support and best wishes. Many, many thanks to all who helped in any way to make Shan's special day such a big success.

As usual when I open my mouth I put my foot into it—I forgot to mention last week when I was naming Miss Malheur County's of the past, that Linda Ballou, now Linda Ady of Rohnert Park, Calif. was one of these lucky ladies in 1968. Also wearing the crown of the first official Miss Malheur County was Nancy Skeen in 1959. She is Nancy Mulder now and lives in Scottsdale, Arizona. My apologies for the oversight.

It sure looks nice to see some of the weeds cut down from around some of the Main Street sidewalks. I know this is a fulltime job in the summer, but to those of us who walk over, around and finally through the same old weeds week after week it's a real treat to be able to see where you are putting your feet.

To those who read the article last week about the missing mama cat and the other cat in the family took over nursing not only her kittens but the abandoned ones as well. You will be happy to know the missing mama was found. She was exceedingly happy to be home with her family. However, she apparently felt the adopted mother was doing such a fine job of house-keeping that she moved in too. Both mamas and kittens are doing fine, not only sharing the same box, but also nursing each others kittens. Sounds like a purrfect situation.

When coming home the other evening (after 10 p.m.) I was amazed to see or hear a tennis game in session on the courts in the South Park. I later found out that this is a frequent happening. This particular park is posted to be closed and cleared by 10 p.m. each evening. This is done so that mischief in the park is held down to a minimum and those persons who live next to the park can be assured of a quiet night's sleep. Perhaps my tennis score would improve on a court with no lights on a dark night. Who knows?

This will be my last column for two weeks as I will be out of the office on my vacation. Don't forget to attend "Thunderegg Days" coming up next week.

## Rep. Ullman Here Thursday

U. S. Representative Al Ullman (D-2nd Congressional District) will meet with the public Thursday, July 29 at 8 p.m. in Room W 10 in the Weese Building at Treasure Valley Community College. Representative Ullman, the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee is touring the eastern part of the congressional district. Following a few brief introductory comments Representative Ullman will answer questions from the local media and the public at the 8 o'clock meeting.

## Journal Receives Excellence Award

Nine Oregon newspapers were recognized for overall excellence at the 89th summer meeting of Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association, July 15-17 at Salishan lodge. The Eugene Register-Guard received the Charles A. Sprague Award of Excellence for daily newspapers. The Springfield News and Polk Sun of Monmouth won the Elmo Smith Awards of Excellence for weekly newspapers. The announcements were made at a Friday night banquet.

Second place general excellence awards went to the Nyssa Gate City Journal, Willamette Week of Portland

and Albany Democrat-Herald Third place winners are Lake County Examiner, Valley News of Eugene and Corvallis Gazette-Times.

Winners in 16 other Better Newspaper Contest categories were announced Saturday at an awards breakfast. The winners represent 43 of the newspapers in the 111-member state press association. Judging was done by the Kansas Press Association.

The Eugene daily placed in 11 categories in addition to the prestigious general excellence division.

The Journal was also awarded second place for Best Editorial for weekly newspapers.

## Speeds Remain At 55 MPH

Continued support of the fuel conservation 55 mile-per-hour speed limit in Oregon was voted by the Oregon Transportation Commission today. The commission acted on a request of Senator Vern Cook to lift the limit if there was no shortage of fuel.

## WEATHER

Date	Max.	Min.	Prec.
July 21	92	64	.06
July 22	93	56	
July 23	95	57	
July 24	99	58	.11
July 25	92	59	
July 26	99	57	
July 27	90	58	
July 28	54		

Owyhee Reservoir Storage  
7,28,76 549,800 Acre Feet  
7,28,75 657,880 Acre Feet