

## **HISTORY OF NESTA ROCK AND MINERAL RAFFLES**

In the Spring of 1987 at Washington, DC, David Mastie introduced NESTA Rock and Mineral Raffles into NSTA conferences. Sharon Stroud was NESTA President. The raffle was patterned after Michigan Earth Science Teachers Association's successful rock raffles and set the stage for all to come. The goals of the NESTA raffles were to educate teachers about rocks, minerals, and fossils, to get these materials into teachers' classrooms, and to attract new members. David, from Michigan, and Sharon, from Colorado, were very interested in promoting earth science and earth materials education.

At the 1987 NSTA area conference in Salt Lake in September, Wilene Rigsby, an Arkansas science teacher with a rockhounding hobby, joined David Mastie in doing the NESTA Rock Raffle. Tickets had not shown up, so they made their own. Dave talked someone locally into running off purple line copies. Wilene sat in sessions and hand-numbered and cut tickets. The room assigned to NESTA for the raffle was not in the main hotel and was small, dark, and cramped. However, it had a balcony, and the raffle expanded outside, with specimens lining the ledge. The number of specimens was meager by today's standards, but attendees that day had a very good time. They asked if there would be more like that because "it was fun".

This was Wilene's first conference and her first time to work with Dave. It would not be the last. She continued to help Dave with the raffles until he moved on to work on other earth science projects. Wilene stayed on as the official Coordinator for NESTA Rock and Mineral Raffles and remains to this date.

Some NESTA Rock Raffles stand out more than others. NSTA 1990 area conference was held in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Since that location had a real need for rocks and minerals, David and Wilene took the NESTA Rock Raffle there. Picture a room full of excited Spanish speaking teachers. Picture Dave and Wilene who speak only English. They enlisted the aid of a nice-looking young man who worked for the hotel. He was the original class clown and was more than willing to translate for them. It was a huge success and definitely unforgettable!!

Just as it takes a village to raise a child, so it takes many NESTA members and other generous contributors and volunteers to make the NESTA Rock and Mineral Raffles what they are today. Donations come from several individuals on a regular basis year in and year out. The Michigan Earth Science Teachers Association, especially Bill and Judy Ruddock, have been steady contributors through first David Mastie, and now through Parker Pennington. Kelly and Wilene Rigsby always supply rocks and minerals from Arkansas and surrounding areas. Sharon Stroud sends minerals from Colorado, along with nice purchased specimens. Frank Ireton can be counted upon to bring very nice specimens. Peter Larmour brings sand for all those sand lovers. The members listed here are only those who form the backbone of the raffle materials for the three area conferences each year and for each national.

Without something else on the "backbone" NESTA Rock Raffles would be in sad shape. However, many, many other members have made donations also which fill out the raffles

nicely. This has been more difficult since airlines have tightened up what could be carried on with passengers. These donors manage to get something there, one piece at a time, and the quality continues to improve.

Sometimes the specimens are very special, such as a piece of Mount St. Helen's volcanic dome, formed after the May 1980 eruption. Steve Carlson (Oregon) brought down one from the mountain and donated it to the NESTA Rock Raffle in Atlanta. Exhibitors and organizations sometimes sponsor tables of earth science materials at the NESTA raffles at NSTA national conferences. This delights the lucky teachers who win these prizes. Mineral collectors also have donated portions of their collections to be raffled off. All of this generosity allows NESTA to continue to interest and educate teachers and generations to come, regarding earth materials and earth science.

NESTA Rock and Mineral Raffles have come a very long way. Dedicated NESTA members and volunteers have guaranteed its success. Let it always be so.

Submitted by:  
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