

Haviland throws rock party

HAVILAND (AP) — This was a rock festival of a different sort. Haviland's first meteorite festival, with the motto "The Rock Stops Here," drew several hundred people on Saturday. Mayor Jeff Christensen hopes to make it an annual event attracting space rock enthusiasts from around the world.

"Isn't it exciting to see something nobody else has seen before?" Christensen said. "There's something about these rocks that's fun. I know there are other meteorites found in other states, but if you go by weight, we'd win. Why, in Texas, their meteorites are the size of marbles. We've got boulders."

Kiowa County, in south-central Kansas, is prime meteorite hunting territory. The prize find to date consists of remnants of a rock that fell

to earth some 20,000 years ago. Scientists estimated that it was 20 feet across and weighed 500 tons — and although at least 95 percent of it likely burned up during its entry, there are still chunks out there waiting to be found.

Since the late 1880s, about 10 tons of space rock have been found in the county.

They are known as the Brenham meteorites, named for Brenham Township near Haviland. And among collectors, they are well-known and highly sought after because their crystals, when cut, resemble stained glass.

Paul Ross, a farmer from Haviland, found 1,500 pounds of space rocks in a single hole on his land three weeks ago. He hopes to sell the find, which included one

250-pound meteorite, for \$200 a pound.

Steve Arnold, who found a 1,400-pounder last fall in a field west of Haviland, brought it to Saturday's festival. Price Gibbons, of Pratt, brought a 130-pounder hoping to see what it might be worth.

It sat in a pool hall for years, then in his yard. But as valuable as meteorites can be, he said, now "I take better care of it."

The festival also featured booths of meteorites, jewelry and educational displays.

Ashton Harrison, 7, of Karval, Colo., bought some meteorite chunks.

"They are ugly," he told his grandmother, Carol Tucker of Hooker, Okla. "But I'll take them to show and tell."

GOP husband, Democratic wife running for same seat

OVERLAND PARK (AP) — They say it's a legitimate political difference. Their detractors say it's a gimmick.

Whatever their reasons, a husband and wife from suburban Kansas City could wind up facing each other this November for the same seat in the Kansas House.

Jeff Ippel is a Republican, involved in a three-way primary race. His wife, Pam, is opposed in the August Democratic primary.

State party leaders say they can't remember the last time a husband and wife ran for the same office.

Pam Ippel, whose platform emphasizes health care and funding for education, said she decided first to run for the open seat in the 48th Kansas House District.

"The more Jeff thought about it, the more he thought he'd have a better chance," she said.

"Better ideas," said her husband, who is running on a conservative platform of small government and fewer illegal immigrants.

But conservative Republican

“ Personally, I think it's a fraud. It's a deliberate strategy of confusion.”

Jeff Colyer, Republican

Jeff Colyer, a physician and former candidate for Congress, says the Ippels' real goal is to siphon away votes from his campaign to ensure the nomination of GOP moderate Sherrelyn Smith.

"Personally, I think it's a fraud," Colyer said. "It's a deliberate strategy of confusion."

Republican Rep. Eric Carter, who is giving up the seat to run for state insurance commissioner, agreed.

"It's an absolute sham," Carter said. "They're trying to confuse voters and manipulate the process."

And while Johnson County Republican Party Chairman Doug Patterson didn't impute any ulterior motives to the Ippels' dueling campaigns, he called it a bad idea.

"If they're serious about the race, it defeats their credibility," Patterson said. "It's just one of those

cute little things that belong in the weird news section."

The Ippels and Smith denied any collusion.

"I do not know them and have not known them," Smith said. "There's absolutely no truth to it."

But if there is a plan to pull votes away from Colyer, one political observer said, it would be a case of conservatives having one of their own tricks pulled on them.

"It's about time the moderates started pulling this stuff," said Kansas State University political science professor Joe Aistrup. "Conservatives have been running stealth candidates for years."

The Ippels have two children of voting age. So who gets the nod there: Mom or Dad?

"I've asked them," Jeff Ippel said. "They said they're going to look at the issues."

Arrest rekindles murder mystery

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Last month's arrest of a Kansas fugitive who had been missing for 16 years has given authorities new hope of solving the 1970 homicide of his former employer, a millionaire Oklahoma rancher.

Damon "Chubb" Anderson, now 64, was a bodyguard for 32-year-old rancher E.C. Mullendore III, who was shot once in the head the

night of Sept. 26, 1970. The killing took place at Mullendore's Cross Bell Ranch near Hulah in Osage County, just south of the Kansas border.

Unsolved since then, the case resurfaced last month when Anderson was arrested in Montana.

Anderson — who has denied any role in the killing — had been sought by the FBI and Chautauqua

County, Kan., for jumping bail in 1990 on charges of cultivation of marijuana valued at more than \$500,000, and possession with the intent to distribute it.

Mullendore had a bodyguard because of his life insurance policy and because he owned 90,000 acres of ranch land, retired Osage County Sheriff George Wayman said.

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