

ELIZABETH RESIDENTS INVOLVED IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

10/25

ELIZABETH, IL – When you think of the Village of Elizabeth you think of a quaint little town with rolling hills and lush green farms. Many people are amazed to find out that Elizabeth is also home to the internationally renown Planetary Studies Foundation. This organization is dedicated to promoting science

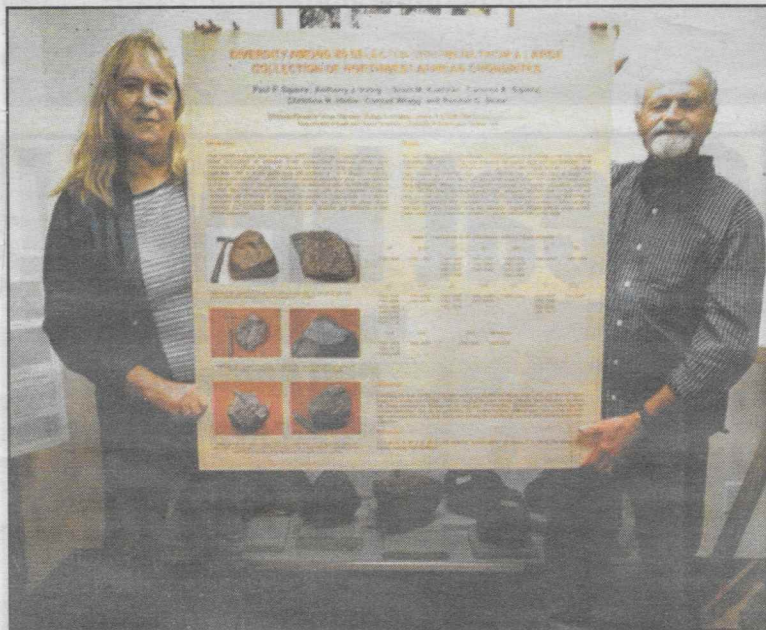


Photo Provided

Christina Hollis is on the left and Randy Shaw is on the right.

education, the history of the Apollo space program, and the advancement of meteorite studies. It currently operates the Earth and Space Science Museum on Main Street in Elizabeth with its interesting exhibits of astronaut memorabilia, meteorites and local geology. Recently, Elizabeth residents Dr. Christina Hollis and Randy Shaw were co-authors on two scientific papers dealing with the classification of rare meteorites. The first paper dealt with a very rare type of stone meteorite and the analytical results were presented by Dr. Tony Irving in March 2017 at the annual Lunar and Planetary Science Conference in Woodlands, Texas. The second paper was also presented by Dr. Irving at the annual meeting of the Meteoritical Society held in July 2017 in Santa Fe, New Mexico. It dealt with the classification of forty meteorites selected from the thousands of unclassified stony meteorites in Christina Hollis' collection.

Meteorites are very important to scientists since they contain clues to the formation of our solar system and possibly life itself. To reveal and understand these clues scientists use a variety of scientific processes

to determine their chemical makeup, mineralogy, age and time in space. These studies are performed at several different university laboratories, but the need for sample preparation begins at a very basic level. Modern analytical studies require only a very small amount of material. This is obtained from the cutting of a small sample of these rather large and odd shaped meteorites. Most stony meteorites have a certain amount of metal in them and it makes the cutting process very difficult. This is where Randy Shaw used his skill with cutting tools to remove the necessary sample for classification purposes. With sparks and meteorite dust flying everywhere Randy cut over twenty of the largest meteorites.

This is not the only time Planetary Studies Foundation scientists relied on local residents for help. Back in 2012 Woodbine businessman Bill Hayes participated in an experiment to help understand what conditions affected the newly recognized Elizabeth, Illinois iron meteorite. It turned out to be a relatively rare type. Without the help from non-scientists these important scientific discoveries would not be possible.