

The West News

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Letters to the Editor should not exceed 200 words. Letters that exceed the word limit may not be considered for publication. For clarification or confirmation, letters should be signed and include address and daytime phone number. We reserve the right to edit all letters and we may condense letters that are accepted for publication. We do not publish form letters, letters written for other publications or anonymous letters. Poems and letters political in nature are considered advertising and will be charged for.

"Whoever would overthrow the liberty of a nation must begin by subduing the freedom of speech." - Benjamin Franklin

Texas Press
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Meteor lands in West area



Doug Dawn gets low to inspect a meteorite he found on Feb. 17 in the West area.
staff photo - Larry Knappek

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were one of the first groups to arrive (Feb. 17) in the area to investigate the meteor sighting. They talked with Trussell and the landowners and confirmed the rocks were meteorites from the Feb. 15 meteor and received permission to do their own searching.

Within less than an hour, Doug along with team members Dena Sadilenka, a Russian chemist from Moscow and Sergey Petikhov, a Russian paleontologist also from Moscow, had found two more meteorites.

Dawn said his team has found hundreds of meteorites since they began actively hunting them in 2002. This was, however, a first for the physical chemist. "It's the first time I've been on a scientific recovery team to be first on the scene of a fresh meteor."

Dawn was quick to send one meteorite to Dr. Alan Rubin, a research geochemist at the University of California - Los Angeles (UCLA) for examination. "He's an approved classifier of meteorites and I sent him a sample and I will probably send him another."

"He ran an analysis and confirmed that it is definitely a chondrite meteorite. That's one of the most common types. It's kind of a stoney-type meteorite as opposed to those consisting of iron or stoney iron."

Dawn was still enthused about the team's meteorite findings which totaled 12 stones weighing just over 10 ounces. These were found after hunting

with Sadilenko and being joined by Rob Matson, a space scientist from Los Angeles. Petikhov had to cut his hunting short as he returned to Moscow.

Concerning the meteor, Dawn said this is the first meteor to fall in Texas this century. "Last century there were about 11 which fell in Texas." He said from what information he was able to gather, he believes the meteor probably traveled along a line from near Penelope on a path to the Aquilla area before it came apart.

This outer space visitor which landed in the area is "about 4.56 billion years old. That's about the time when the sun was forming," Dawn explained. "It experienced a lot of heating in space during its existence. We can tell from its analysis that it may have traveled close to the sun at one time. We do know that."

He said the meteor has been classified as an L6, which is a scientific term for the amount of heat it was exposed to during its existence.

Right now, Dawn man said the exact size of the meteor when it entered the Earth's atmosphere is still unknown. There has been some speculation that it could have been the size of a pickup truck, however he dismisses that. "Right now there is no way to tell. With more analysis, they might be able to find out."

For Dawn, his West findings were a once in a lifetime happening. "It's an answer to a dream. I feel like we (the team) have

accomplished more than I could ever have imagined. I truly feel we have been blessed. February 17 is the most exciting day of my life. There is nothing close. We were able to play a part in its history and do a service to science."

Since word got out about the meteorite findings in the area, several meteorite hunters have converged on the city. Some are just meteorite collectors while others are in the business of buying and selling them.

Meteorite hunter Jason Phillips along with fellow hunters Rob Wesel and Patrick Thompson, both of Portland, Oregon have all been in the area for the weekend.

All three hunt meteorites as a hobby and have found this week's hunting to be a little difficult. "I walked a little over 20 miles (one day) and found one about the size of a dime," Phillips said. So far, he has found two (dime size) meteorites.

His hunting pals have been a little more fortunate. Wesel said he found five, while Thompson's count has reached seven. Wesel added that he had purchased one from an area resident, whose dog found it and brought it to the house.

The three speculated there were anywhere from 20 to 25 meteorite hunters in the area and when asked about the going price rate for meteorites, they said it could be approximately \$1,000 to \$2,000 per pound, depending on the quality.

For area residents wishing to take to their property in search of the all-elusive meteorite, it might be similar to looking for the proverbial needle in a haystack. Dawn does give area hunters some tips. The meteorites' crust are black in color and could be any size. If they are chipped, the inside would have a grayish, white almost concrete-type texture and might have flecks of metal in it. A metal detector or magnet might also be useful as the meteorites consist of various degrees of metal.

He also said the weight is heavier than a rock the same size. As an example, he said a meteorite the size of a basketball would probably weigh about 100 pounds. Also the 12 meteorites his team found weighed just over 10 ounces.

Probably a good pair of walking shoes might help as most likely there will be much walking involved.

Another I of View

By Keith Peck

This column is written on Ak present president fancies himself news for him - he is no Abe Lincoln (Abe). The story is told of Lincoln use of logic. In his examination of legs does a dog have?" The witness asked, "If we call his tail a leg." The witness said, "Five." Lincoln calling his tail a leg does not making for two days that the stimulus. It DOES have pork in it - they just gressmen think that we are a but regardless of the name you give it.

I fear for our nation. I fear that 12:2-3 God told Abram, "I will make you a great nation; I will bless you; I will make your name great. I will bless those who bless you. I will bless you, because you are blessed. Even when they strayed into fellowship.

Our nation was founded on the Israel. The men who wrote our Constitution followed biblical principles. In recent years we have followed the Constitution and have become a mortal man. Sin is no longer sin, God has substituted his wishes, desire.

This month, there will be celebration. A man called Charles Darwin with his theory of evolution, and its acceptance at schools, court rooms, halls of justice, we have sinned away our freedom to have it our own way. We desire the next few weeks, months or years to be sufficient if we as individuals and all are to be sincere, heartfelt and all are to be backs on those such as Michael New.

The psalmist wrote in Psalms 139:1-6 whose God is the Lord, the people of the Lord. From heaven the Lord looks down and dwells in the hearts of all, who considers every

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continue through March 11.

The West Band Boosters are also planning some more fundraisers in the near future.

Spaghetti dinner Sunday

This Sunday, the Band Boosters are planning a Spaghetti Dinner from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. in the West High School cafeteria. Hart said the proceeds from this particular

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