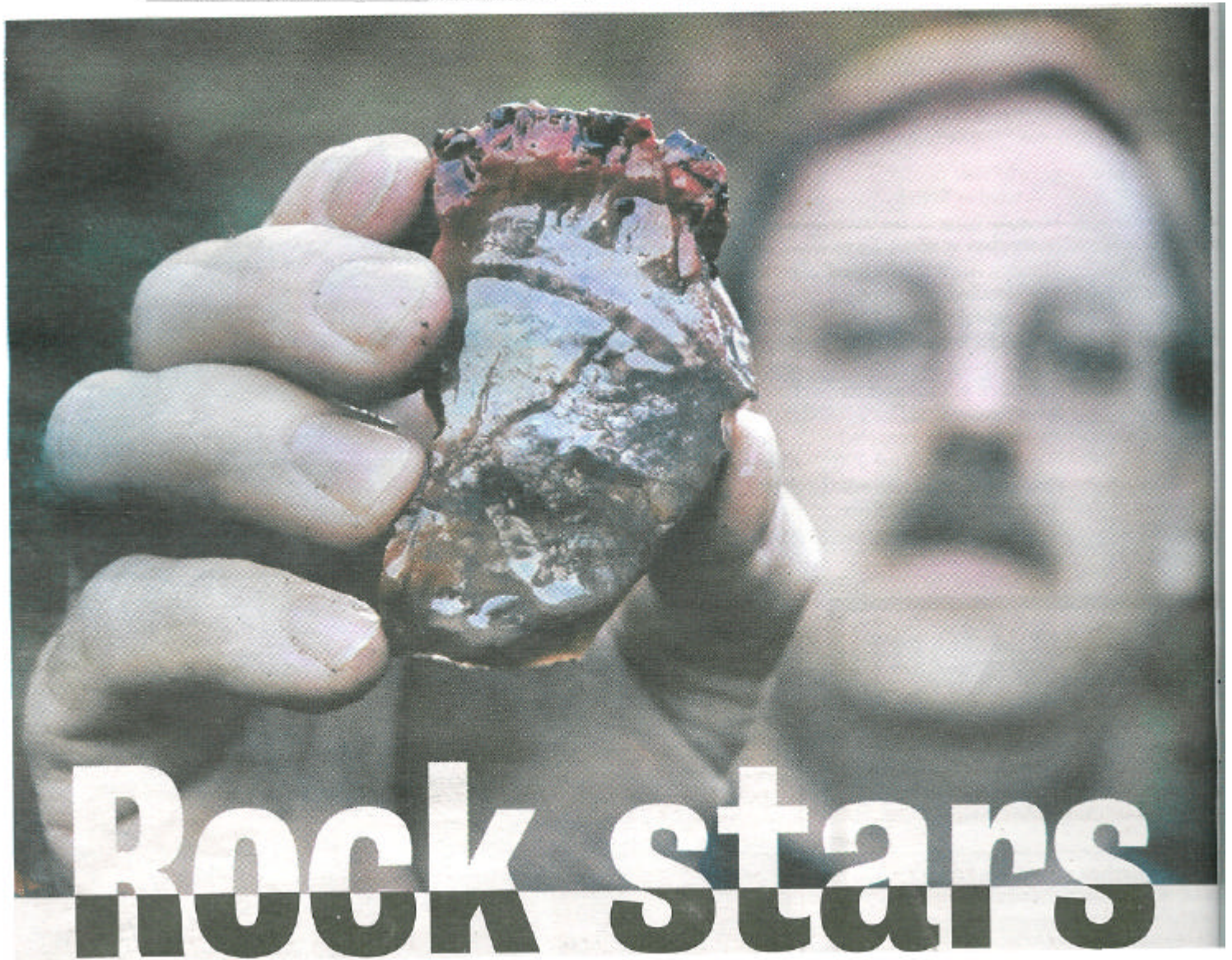


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Scotts Valley's Randy and June Harris have collected more than 10,000 pounds of rocks throughout their travels, and they're ready to share some of their more spectacular finds, including this piece of "rainbow" petrified wood from Arizona, at an upcoming show in Santa Cruz.

# Rockhounds ready to show off their treasures

By Peter Burke  
Press-Banner

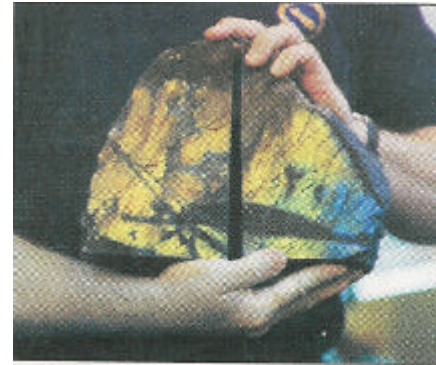
Randy and June Harris have more than 10,000 pounds of rocks lying around their home in north Scotts Valley.

But those five tons of stone are far from rubble. They are colorful, many-textured stones many of which have been cut to reveal bright and rare innards that were formed millions of years ago in the depths of the earth.

"There are a lot of things I like; but thundereggs are my passion," Randy Harris said. The egg-shaped stones are cut lengthwise to reveal their "yolks": colorful formations of minerals, each with a unique pattern.

He will show part of his thunderegg collection at the Santa Cruz Mineral and Gem Society's 58th annual show at the Civic Auditorium next weekend.

The Harrises travel the West Coast seeking new stones from collectors or from the ground. One of Randy's favorite places is the Richardson Rock Ranch in Madras, Oregon. - a place famous for its agate beds and rich in thundereggs buried in the soft earth. .



**SECRETS OF THE EARTH:** Rock-hunters Randy and June Harris will show off some of their more impressive finds at an upcoming mineral and gem show. Among their prized rocks are this piece of "rainbow" petrified wood (at far left) and a Labradorite from Madagascar.

**Lucjan Szewczyk;**  
Press-Banner

## ROCKS

"Oregon is really a rock-rich area," he said. "There are so many things that you'll find."

Randy, a 48-year-old electrical and mechanical engineer, became a self-described "rockhound" in 2002, realizing the rock-collecting aspirations he had acquired from both his grandfather as a boy.

Today, he and June often travel to places like the Richardson Ranch to collect and buy hundreds or thousands of Pounds of rocks and cart them home for examination.

He slices stones open with special rock saws and then sands and polishes the cut edges in a process that takes weeks to complete. .

Recently they traveled to Arizona and rented a trailer to carry home 1,800 pounds of petrified "rainbow" wood from an area near Petrified c Forest National Park outside of Holbrook, Arizona "They returned with some fist-sized chunks and a 300-pound stone "stump" that, after many hours of cutting and polishing work, will serve as a base of a glass-topped coffee table.

The many-hued pedestal appears to be wood, but after 225 million years, it is solid stone. The Harrises belong to two lapidary clubs: the Santa Clara Valley Gem and Mineral Society, in which they are heavily involved, and the Santa Cruz Mineral and Gem Society, which they joined two years ago. They will display some of their treasures in Santa Clara this weekend and at the Santa Cruz show next weekend.



Lucjan Szewczyk/Press-Banner

### At a glance

- **WHAT:** Santa Cruz Mineral and Gem Society show
- **WHEN:** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. April 24 and 25
- **WHERE:** Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium, 307 Church St., in Santa Cruz
- **COST:** Adults, \$4; children under 12 and Scouts in uniform, free
- **INFO:** [www.scmgs.org](http://www.scmgs.org)

For Randy, the greatest joy of rock collecting is the discovery of something new. "It's probably the adventure of going and finding them and the surprises you get when you cut them open," he said. "You never know what you're going to find."

. To comment, e-mail editor Peter Burke at [peter@pressbanne7.com](mailto:peter@pressbanne7.com), call 438-2500 or post a comment at [www.pressbanne7.com](http://www.pressbanne7.com).