

Large collection of mineral spheres donated to museum



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By Leslie Shaw Hi-Desert Star

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A bequest of 97 mineral spheres was made to the Hi-Desert Nature Museum from the estate of Joseph Peter Henz, previously of Twentynine Palms. With the help of volunteers, museum biologist Stefanie Ritter has set up a sphere display in the museum's lobby.

YUCCA VALLEY — A bequest of 97 mineral spheres was made to the Hi-Desert Nature Museum recently from the estate of Joseph Peter Henz.

Museum biologist Stefanie Ritter and her volunteers have set up a display of the spheres in the museum's lobby.

Henz, a Twentynine Palms resident, was born May 16, 1918, and died March 3, 2011.

He was a member of the Oasis Rock Club of Twentynine Palms until it and a few other clubs combined into the Hi-Desert Rockhounds of the Morongo Basin. The combined club helped the museum manage the bequest.

Club President Roger Thompson knew Henz. "He had hundreds of spheres and more equipment than most of our club's rockhounds combined," Thompson said. "The museum had asked for help and that's how a small group from our club came to deal with Joseph's lapidary legacy."

Henz's spheres join a collection given to the museum by his wife.

"This is not the first bequest we've received from this family. We have an amazing collection of Maggie Henz's pine-needle baskets on display, which were given to museum upon her death about 15 years ago," Ritter said via email Wednesday.



Courtesy Photo

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At his Twentynine Palms house, Joseph Peter Henz displayed his stone spheres in every room. Henz donated the 97 spheres to the museum in his will.



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Maggie Henz, Joseph Peter Henz's wife, also made a bequest to the museum upon her death about 15 years ago. She donated her handmade baskets and the museum has them on display.