

Beauty contests get boulder and boulder

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The contestants remained aloof while the judges pawed and poked at them. There wasn't even a smile or a blush from the winner.

The contestants' stony seriousness was appropriate. The judges were picking a "plymouth rock" to occupy a spot near the new Plymouth town hall that is being built.

The event, sponsored by the Plymouth Lions Club, drew about 100 persons who entered contestant rocks and laid them out in a local shop-

ping center parking lot for judging yesterday.

The grand prize was an all-expense-paid weekend for two (enterers, not enterees) at the Radisson Inn in Plymouth. But more than the prize, the civic pride of Plymouth was at stake.

Some persons had scoured the countryside for their perfect rock. Mrs. Joe Raskob found hers in a nearby swamp. It weighed about nine tons, she said, and had to be moved with a flat-bed truck equipped with a hoist.

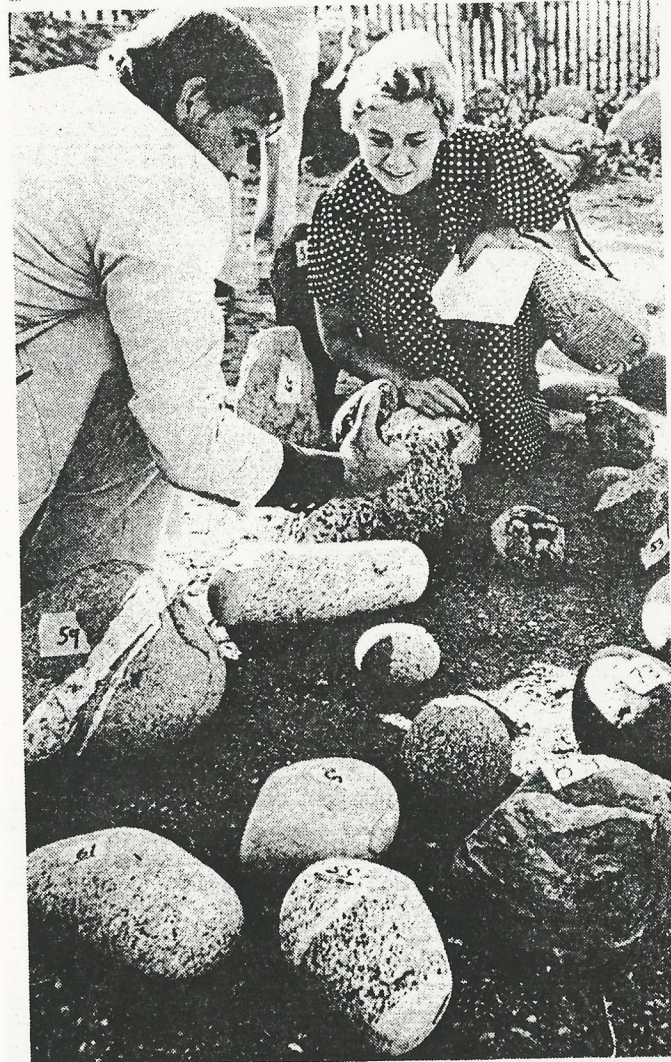
"I like strange things," she said, "and this is the strangest." You have to be strange, she said, "to dig in a swamp for 6½ hours for a rock."

She hired a man and his truck to help her, she said, but almost gave up at one point when the two were slopping around in the muck, trying to unglue the rock from the mud.

"I said, 'Leave the damn rock there,' He said, 'No, we could be making Plymouth history.'"

According to the rules, a grand prize, "class-A" winning rock, to be displayed at the town hall, had to weigh more than 50 pounds. Another class was set up for rocks weighing 25

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Star Photo by Tom Sweeney

PLYMOUTH JUDGES LOOKED FOR THE AWARD WINNING ROCK
Community wanted a specimen with character

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ROCKS: Some just took their character for granite

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pounds or less for portable display by the city.

Rocks had to be "natural," not painted, chipped or broken from larger rocks. Entries were judged on texture, size, shape, color and "character."

"We stayed up several nights past 1 a.m. trying to figure out the criteria (for character), but 'how do you know that?'" said Carolyn Miller, who with her husband, Gene, a past Lions president, came up with the idea for the contest.

It was something the judges would just have to sense, the Millers decided.

Other persons thought size was the key and several entries were massive. "You just look for a great big, ugly rock," one person advised on

picking a champion.

Cleanliness also was important. "We don't have any dusty contestants," said Mrs. Miller of the rows of rocks. "They have all been scrubbed and groomed." And, like well-bred poodles, "they have been very well behaved."

For the 12 judges, many of whom are politicians and town leaders, choosing a winner was a perplexing, if not awesome, responsibility. Being big and having a flat side for a plaque were important qualifications, said judge Sheldon Tart, a local businessman. But, he added, "I'll be damned if I know beyond that."

He said there were drawbacks in choosing a heavy rock, however, since someone would have to move it to city hall. "I suppose they (the city council members) would want us to physically move this thing up there," he said, eyeing one

boulder.

Vernon Peterson's rock won first place. It is smaller than some of its rivals but has a distinctive vein up one side.

For some spectators, the difference between the winners and losers was obvious.

"There's a good-looking rock," said Jim Ayers, "It's kind of like mine, but it's better. That little devil over there," he said pointing at his entry, "I'm ashamed of it."

He shook his head as he compared his rock with those around it. "It sure did look better in the ground than it does with all these others," he said.

But he said he is attached to his rock, which he found in his front yard. After the competition he said, "I'm going to take it right back and put it in the same hole."