



By Carolyn Lee

The Imperial Republican

Who would have thought that picking up pebbles in a parking lot would lead a Romanian family to travel to Imperial? That's what happened when Karen Hayes of Imperial became interested in rock polishing several years ago.

She joined Rock Tumbling Hobby, an Internet organization, and began corresponding with others who also enjoyed making jewelry from rocks and fossils.

That led to a friendship with Adrian and Ina Prodescu. The couple and their 15-year-old daughter, Ioana, have just concluded a one-month tour of the western United States.

They flew into Denver, rented a car and began visiting national parks that they'd seen on the Discovery Channel. "We thought it was worthwhile to see them," Adrian commented.

"We focused on natural monuments," such as Bryce Canyon, Yellowstone Park and the Grand Canyon.

It's natural that the Prodescus have enjoyed rock formations, as it is Adrian's main hobby. Ina is becoming more fascinated, too.

Adrian began by collecting fossils, then moved on to petrified wood. He searched the Internet for information about grinding and polishing techniques, and has developed his own style of jewelry wire wrapping.

He doesn't sell his creations. "I'm afraid it would ruin the hobby. It's for my own pleasure," he commented.

However, members of Rock Tumbling Hobby exchange rocks. One that Hayes gave Adrian was cut into three pieces, polished and shaped into necklaces for Hayes, Ina and Ioana.

One of Adrian's favorite rocks was actually picked up from an unpaved road. It is petrified wood with traces of worms in it.

Both Prodescus are civil engineers in Bucharest, the capital of Romania. It's a city of two and one-half million people.

Adrian teaches at Bucharest Civil Engineering University. Ina designs railroad bridges.

They have been planning their trip for more than a year. As they packed to return home this past Sunday, they joked that they had to purchase a larger suitcase for all of their new possessions.

Hayes also plans to ship them other purchases and gifts they have accumulated on their trip. Rocks can weigh a lot in airplane luggage.