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Pet rock 1970s

You may have heard the story of the Pet Rock, the Mexican beach stone that could be purchased in bulk for less than a penny, retailed for \$3.95, and made inventor Gary Dahl a millionaire during a kind of novelty gift hysteria in late 1975. But Dahl didn’t really get rich off of the rock. He got rich off of a cardboard box. Dahl was working as a freelance advertising copywriter in California that year when, while having drinks at a bar with friends, the conversation turned to the destructive nature of pets. Dogs and cats ruined furniture. Worse, they required constant attention, from being walked to being fed to cleaning up after them. Dahl said that he didn’t have to worry about any of that because he had a “pet rock.” It was, of course, a joke. And it got a laugh. But Dahl decided there could be more to it than that. He went home and began writing an owner’s manual for this hypothetical pet rock, which detailed how best to handle it, the tricks it could perform (“play dead” being the most popular), and how it could remain a faithful companion due to its “long life span.” The gag was not so much the rock itself but the way it was presented. In addition to the manual, Dahl conceived of a cardboard box with air holes that resembled the kind used by pet shops. It also bore a passing resemblance to a McDonald’s Happy Meal container. Dahl’s motivation in making a serious effort to monetize his pet rock idea was due in large part to his precarious financial situation at the time—he was struggling to keep up with his bills. He recruited George Coakley and John Heagerty, two colleagues, to come on as investors. They both signed on, with Coakley investing \$10,000—a not-inconsiderable sum in 1975, especially when the intention was to sell virtually worthless rocks. Wikimedia Commons // Public Domain Dahl, however, knew what he was marketing. Like chattering teeth, the Hula Hoop, and other fads, the Pet Rock was the beneficiary of good timing. Vietnam had ended but Watergate was still fresh; the country’s mood was slightly downcast, and Dahl believed people would see the inane nature of the Pet Rock and recognize the humor of it. He boxed the rocks with the manual and packed them in excelsior, which may be best known as comic book legend Stan Lee’s catchphrase but also heans a softwood shaving pile meant for protecting fragile items. The rocks were purchased from a local sand and gravel company, which sourced them from Mexico’s Rosarita Beach. Dahl debuted the rock at a gift show in San Francisco in August of 1975, then waited for a reaction. He got one. People understood the appeal right away and he began taking orders. Neiman Marcus wanted 1000 rocks. Bloomingdale’s later signed on. Newsweek did a story with a picture, which spread the word. Dahl had retail and media credibility for what was superficially a nonsense product. His bar joke was turning into a national phenomenon. When the holiday season arrived, Dahl estimated he was selling up to 100,000 Pet Rocks a day. Ultimately, he would sell between 1.3 and 1.5 million of them within a period of just a few months. Coakley made \$200,000 back on his initial \$10,000 investment. Dahl gifted both Coakley and Heagerty with Mercedes. Making 95 cents in profit on each Pet Rock sold, Dahl earned over \$1 million. He launched his own firm, Rock Bottom Productions, which was itself another joke. “You’ve reached Rock Bottom” is how the receptionist answered their phone. The fad did not last—but by definition, they’re not designed to—but Dahl was satisfied. His two investors were not; they “claimed they had received too small a share of the profits” and later sued Dahl for more revenue. After a judgment in the investors’ favor, Dahl wrote them a six-figure check. Amazon There were attempts to prolong the life of the rock by offering a Bicentennial version in 1976—it had the American flag painted on it—and mail-order college degrees for them. Dahl sold Pet Rock T-shirts and Pet Rock shampoo. There were also copycat gifts, since Dahl could not really patent a rock. (He might have been able to obtain a utility patent because of the rock’s particular purpose as a companion, but he did not.) The humor was transient, however, and people had moved on. Dahl had other ideas. There was the Official Sand Breeding Kit, which claimed to provide guidance on growing sand, and Canned Earthquake, which consisted of a coffee can that had a wind-up mechanism that caused it to jump around on a table. Neither was particularly successful. Dahl’s real passion, though, was buying and renovating a bar in Los Gatos, which he named Carrie Nation’s Saloon. This was not without its problems, as people who believed they had the next Pet Rock would often stop by the bar to try and secure an audience with Dahl for his insight. Many times, their idea consisted of packaging bull or elephant excrement. There were also proposals to market a pet stick. Dahl had no patience for these inventors, believing the Pet Rock could not be duplicated. Later, he went back to advertising after taking what he described as an “eight-year vacation” following the success of his project. The Pet Rock can still be found online, though it’s no longer Dahl’s business. He died in 2015. Of the unsold rocks he had left over at the end of the fad, he was indifferent. If they didn’t sell, he said, he would just use them to repave his driveway. Reviewer: there will be spoilers - favoritefavoritefavoritefavorite - May 13, 2025 Subject: Excellent Ridiculously funny and silly, "rock pedigree is a thing" Your rock will excel at the command "stay"and "play dead". Read via text to speech on Internet ... Archive disabled account using Edge browser (Linux/Windows) worked well (a few words were cut off) . It's so creative, would be a great gag gift. Content warnings: all minor : mugging, violence in self defense, blood, death Reviewer: green kurb - favoritefavoritefavoritefavoritefavorite - September 8, 2024 Subject: its the rock its the best book ever Reviewer: nikos3194 - favoritefavoritefavoritefavoritefavorite - August 30, 2023 Subject: A must read for any pet rock owner I remember that the joke originated in those who expressed discomfort in caring for animal pets, such as having to feed them, take them for a walk, take ... care of hygiene or attend to any illnesses. Then someone said: If any of that bothers you, you should have a rock instead! Gary Dahl was truly a genius. He made the Tamagotchi before the Tamagotchi. Reviewer: Martijn-nl - favoritefavoritefavoritefavoritefavorite - August 30, 2023 Subject: I am a better person now Up until now, my life has been empty and void. I did not know that I lacked something in my life, but there it was: I now understand that a pet rock brings ... a level of fulfillment I could not have achieved otherwise. And than to think that I was only four years old when this guide was first published! Reviewer: Mark Vandersluis - favoritefavoritefavoritefavoritefavorite - August 29, 2023 Subject: The Best Manual ... the Subject I still have that Manual, which came with my pet rock, a Christmas present in the mid-70s. My rock has been a constant, faithful companion for almost 50 ... years, never straying from my study or misbehaving. It's as healthy as the day it arrived, which I ascribe to following the manual's instructions and recommendations to the letter. Recommended. Reviewer: LinkArchitechts - favoritefavoritefavoritefavoritefavorite - February 27, 2023 Subject: Recommended Even if you believe your pet is in good health, you should bring them in for an annual checkup with a licence vet. This can be a preventive measure because ... annual exams help to preserve your pet's health and lower the danger of developing severe or life-threatening illnesses or infections, which can be very expensive for you. These days, online platforms like PetCareRx or applications make it simple for pet parents to discover vets on time if you have trouble getting to one. Reviewer: TNTAtomic - favoritefavoritefavoritefavoritefavorite - January 11, 2023 Subject: Best guide I adopted a pet rock and this resource book has helped me so much, it stopped an armed robbery and helped me get medical care right away when I didn't ... know I needed it for my rock. I now have a best friend for life. Reviewer: Tetrododoxin - favoritefavoritefavoritefavoritefavorite - August 31, 2022 Subject: Thank you I wouldn't have known how to care for my pet rock without this guide There are 8 reviews for this item. . Skip to content Directions A day ahead, bake ham as directed on wrapper. Cool and chill. Next day, remove all rind and fat from ham. Soak 2 envelopes gelatin in 1/2 cup chicken broth in bowl 5 minutes. Dissolve gelatin by placing bowl in pan of simmering water; remove from water. Blend in vinegar, sour cream, and mayonnaise or salad dressing to make chaud-froid. Brush a third of chaud-froid over chilled ham; spoon remainder over ham to give a smooth coating. Chill thoroughly. Soak remaining 1 envelope gelatin in 1-1/2 cups chicken broth; dissolve over low heat; chill until syrupy. Coat pimiento, green pepper, and ripe olive cutouts with small amount of syrupy gelatin. Arrange in design on ham. Chill until set. Spoon remaining gelatin mixture over ham (if gelatin sets before using, heat slightly to melt to syrupy stage). Chill ham until serving time. Cold glazed baked ham recipe Also from this article: Creamy chicken mold recipe (1965) Frosted layered sandwich loaf (1965) It's somehow fitting that the news would break just before April Fools' Day: The New York Times reports that Gary Dahl, inventor of the Pet Rock, died on March 23, at 78 years old. But to equate the Pet Rock to an April Fools' Day gag is an oversimplification of its appeal. When it debuted in 1975, the Pet Rock was the perfect combination of three decades' ethos: it had the whimsy of the 1960s, the ironic, absurdist sensibility of the '70s, and the consumerism of the imminent '80s. But more important than that, it was a viral joke years before YouTube was even a word. Yes, it was ultimately just a rock in a box. But Dahl proved that a well-executed rock in a box could become a phenomenon. Gary Dahl was an ad man looking for a good idea when he came up with the idea for the Pet Rock. As Dahl told People magazine in 1975, the idea came during a bar conversation when he realized, “People are so damn bored, tired of all their problems. This takes them on a fantasy trip — you might say we’ve packaged a sense of humor.” But the Pet Rock wasn’t just a good idea. It was a good idea that was executed with extreme precision. The rocks were just Mexican beach stones, but the packaging was meticulous: each one came on a bed of straw with a carrying case (with holes) and, most important, an instruction manual. The manual began with the sensitivity of a Dr. Spock book, warning owners to be careful with their new pet. Your new rock is a very sensitive pet and may be slightly traumatized from all the handling and shipping required in bringing the two of you together. The rest of the manual details the amazing tricks a Pet Rock can do. Among other things, it’s very good at sitting. That entire package — rock, carrying case, straw, and manual — worked together to create a gag gift that seemed effortless. Any one component wouldn’t have worked, but together, the entire package fascinated the nation. In an age long before the internet could spread ideas in an instant, Dahl was selling 100,000 Pet Rocks a day. By the time the fad started to die down, he’d sold at least 1.3 million of his Pet Rock kits. (A hit as big as the Pet Rock inspired some controversy, of course. Dahl ended up being sued for money by his business partner, George Coakley, and was forced to pay out.) So what made the Pet Rock so popular? Even Dahl wasn’t sure. His subsequent creations were a flop by comparison — they included Red China Dirt and the Official Sand Breeding Kit (the latter had male and female test tubes filled with sand that the owner could breed). Neither approached the Pet Rock’s hit status, and eventually Dahl grew irritated by the notoriety of his big hit. “I’m sick of the whole damn thing,” he told one reporter in 1999. It’s impossible to say why the Pet Rock succeeded where other bizarre ideas failed. It might be because the idea and execution of the original were so perfect that any new idea paled in comparison. In a way, that makes it a precursor to today’s mysterious viral hits. Why does one blue-and-black (or gold-and-white) dress go viral, but countless other optical illusions fall flat? Why does a video of Charlie biting a kid’s finger become iconic while another video of the same kids is cute but boring? The Pet Rock exploited a viral joke for significant profit even though Dahl couldn’t quite understand the ingredients that made it work. It’s tempting to come up with a theory of why the Pet Rock became a phenomenon, but if anyone knew for sure, there’d be a lot more of these former fads cluttering our closets. For most of us, there’s only one pet still there. See More: Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution — You must give appropriate credit , provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made . You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. Share Alike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation . No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. Collectible toy This article is about the rock. For the 1981 album by the Sinceros, see Pet Rock (album). Pet Rock The Pet Rock "Pet Carrier", which doubled as its packaging Type Collectible toy Invented by Gary Dahl Country United States Availability 1975–Materials Rock Pet Rock is a collectible toy made in 1975 by advertising executive Gary Dahl. They are rocks packaged in custom cardboard boxes[1] complete with ventilation holes and straw bedding imitating a pet carrier.[2] Gary Dahl came up with the idea in a bar while listening to his friends complain about their pets; this gave him the idea for the perfect "pet".[3] A rock would not need to be fed, walked, bathed, or groomed, and it would not die, become sick, or be disobedient. Dahl said that they were to be the perfect pets and joked about it with his friends before producing Pet Rocks as toys in 1975.[3] Lacking the capital to launch the product, Dahl convinced some colleagues to invest in it.[4] He purchased the actual rocks from Mexican beaches for less than a penny each.[4] The Pet Rock was introduced in August 1975 at a San Francisco trade show, and Dahl was then swarmed by orders from retailers.[4] The fad lasted about six months, ending after a short increase in sales during the Christmas season of December 1975. Although by February 1976 they were discounted due to lower sales,[citation needed] Dahl sold nearly 1.5 million Pet Rocks for just under \$4 each during the initial release, turning 95 cents profit on each unit.[4] and became a millionaire.[5][6][7] In 2022, the toy company Super Impulse purchased the rights to the Pet Rock, reviving the brand.[8] In the 2020s, Pet Rocks grew in popularity in South Korea as tools for meditation or venting out frustrations. Members of K-pop groups such as Seventeen and Enhypen post about their Pet Rocks online.[9] A24 produced an official licensed Pet Rock as a tie-in for the film Everything Everywhere All at Once. This version of the Pet Rock has a pair of googly eyes attached in reference to a scene from that film. Also included are the straw bedding and instructions of the original, and a new version of the ventilated box printed with scenery from the film.[10][11][12] The Pet Rock has had a lasting impact on popular culture. The character Zoe from Sesame Street owns a pet rock called Rocco. A video of Elmo from Sesame Street shouting at Rocco went viral in early 2022. [13] One of the team helping to launch the Commodore PET computer joked that with the Pet Rock phenomenon, Commodore were going to make a pet computer. The name stuck.[14] In the film Minions: The Rise of Gru, the character Otto acquires a Pet Rock. He trades the zodiac stone for it, an integral point of the plot.[15] To promote the film, Sabco Limited released an official Pet Rock video game for Nintendo Switch.[16] A Funko Pop depicting Otto with his Pet Rock was also released.[17] The video game Magic: The Gathering Arena features a Pet Rock named Dwayne.[18] In the 1999 movie Office Space the characters discuss the Pet Rock, with one of the characters admiring Dahl's initiative, stating "the guy made a million dollars", then discussing a similar, gimmicky product he would like to sell himself.[19] In the MMORPG World of Warcraft Pet Rocks are obtainable items with no purpose.[20] In the MMORPG Oldschool RuneScape a pet rock is obtainable in the quest The Fremennik Trials[21] During the travels of the Perseverance rover on Mars, NASA scientists had observed around Sol 341 (February 4, 2022) that a small rock had dropped into one of its wheels. The rock was visible from one of the hazard avoidance cameras, and was determined not to be harmful to the rover's mission. The rock has since stayed on Perseverance's wheel for around 427 sols (439 days) as the rover traveled over 6 miles (9.7 km) on the Martian surface. NASA deemed that Perseverance had adopted a pet rock for its journey.[22][23][24] Later the rover picked up another pet rock named "Dwayne".[25] Fidget spinner Worry stone Fidget Cube Office toy Stress ball Spinning top ^ Woo, Elaine (April 1, 2015). "Gary Ross Dahl, originator of '70s Pet Rock sensation, dies at 78". Los Angeles Times. Retrieved 2015-04-01. ^ a b Bathroom Reader's Institution, ed. (September 1999). "The Latest Thing". Uncle John's Legendary Lost Bathroom Reader. Portable Press. p. 373. ISBN 1-879682-74-5. ^ Jane and Michael Stern (1992). "Pet Rocks". Encyclopedia of POP Culture. Harper Perennial Press. Retrieved 2015-07-18. ^ a b c d Eury, Michael (November 2020). "The 'Pet Rock' RetroFan. 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"NASA's Perseverance rover loses its hitchhiking 'pet rock' after more than a year together on Mars". Live Science. Retrieved August 29, 2024. ^ Kooser, Amanda (June 1, 2024). "NASA Mars Rover Picks Up Pet Rock Named 'Dwayne'". Forbes. Retrieved August 29, 2024. Official website Pet Rock in Top 10 Toy Crazes by Time magazine Retrieved from " Skip to content Just how hot was the Pet Rock in its heyday? In late 1976 — after the craze was all but over — entrepreneur Gary Dahl, the creator of the runaway hit gag gift, had reportedly grossed an estimated \$4 million. From selling rocks, The rocks themselves came from Rosarito Beach in Mexico, for which Rock Bottom Productions paid just pennies apiece before packaging them up and selling them for \$4 a pop. "Before he unveiled the Pet Rock, Dahl was a struggling freelance advertising man," the Associated Press wrote in February 1977. The man behind the fad added, "That's another word for being broke." If you want to know more about the history of the Pet Rock, below you can see a few of the little critters — along with excerpts from the vintage manual: "The care and training of your Pet Rock." That slim volume featured a variety of helpful tips on everything from paper training to teaching basic commands. That was important, because nobody wanted an unruly rock. Hopefully, if you did it all correctly, you wouldn't have to deal with a chip off the old block... or end up with a litter of pebbles. The history of the Pet Rock: Promoter makes fortune selling rocks as pets (1975) From the Santa Ana Register (Santa Ana, California) November 10, 1975 You're not considered 'in' in some circles if you don't have a rock for a pet And now, for only \$4, the perfect pet can be yours — if you don't mind taking a rock for a walk. Pet Rocks: A few of the most popular breeds Gary Dahl, a San Jose advertising man, came up with the idea a few months ago of marketing pet rocks, hoping they would appeal to the sort of person who, well, might like a pet rock. It turns out there are quite a few such people. "Incredible as it may seem, we've sold 60,000 so far," said Dahl's wife, Marguerite, vice president of Rock Bottom Productions. "Those rocks are gathering green dollars instead of moss." ANOTHER FAD TO SEE: Vintage lava lamps: They were 'like wild - way out!' (1960s & 1970s) Vintage Pet Rock instructions Praise your rock and give it a pat of approval. A pat of approval works wonders. For \$4, the purchaser receives an egg-sized stone packaged in a cardboard box with air holes, plus a manual on the care and feeding of petrified pets. According to the manual, the Pet Rocks need no training to be able to sit, play dead or roll over. They also can be taught to attack by placing them inside a purse, then hitting a mugger on the head. SECTION ONE Simple obedience. Come. It is essential that your PET ROCK learn this command. A rock that doesn't come when it's called will cause its owner endless embarrassment. Command gently but firmly. The idea for the novelty Pet Rock came to Dahl, 38, one evening as he was having a drink in a local tavern and a stranger asked if he had a pet. "I keep a rock for a pet," Dahl responded. "You don't need a license. You don't have to feed it. It doesn't mess up. It's quiet. And there are no offspring to worry about." ALSO SEE: Mood rings: The colorful new-age '70 trend - and what the colors meant The stranger departed before the end of the explanation, leaving Dahl to ponder his brainstorm. Two months later, he was turning a profit. "They're different, they appeal to a special sense of humor," explained Mialma McWilliams, a buyer at San Francisco's Liberty House, one of several stores doing a brisk business in the rocks. NOTE: If, when you remove the rock from its box it appears to be excited, place it on some old newspapers. The rock will know what the paper is for and will require no further instruction. It will remain on the paper until you remove it. Dahl says he's being besieged by offers from inventors who want hint to market their ideas. One of the latest is a coin-changing machine that gives the wrong change. "Now that's really weird," said Dahl. Top photos thanks to reinhardprblish & thevarsityclub DON'T MISS: The '50s Hula Hoop fad gets millions twirling & whirling - plus tips on how to hoop

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