

THE GOLD NUGGET

December 2020

Obituary

Donald Ditzler

It is with deep sadness that we report the passing of Club Life Member Donald Ditzler who passed away in early November following a long bout with pneumonia in his current home of Savoy, Illinois. Don had moved to Savoy to be closer to his children and grandchildren during his later years. He stayed in touch with the Club through the Newsletter and looked forward to getting it each month. He often communicated by letter with me to discuss different forms and means of prospecting and to describe his experiences which were numerous and quite enlightening. He was an original member of the Club and a past Board Member as well. He was a good man, a good prospector, and a good friend. He will certainly be missed, as he was a part of the Club history. RIP Good Friend...!



The Meeting for December is Cancelled!

"Due to the current covid uptick, I seriously doubt right now, that we will be getting a meeting in any time soon. This means all of our planned events for the rest of the year are cancelled. However, I will of course let everyone know should things change. Until then, maintain your social distancing, wear those hated masks, and hope this madness goes away, the sooner the better."

When we are able to meet again, Club Elections will be foremost on the agenda. I have stepped down as President after 10 years at the helm. Board members J. Fortunato, J. Johnson, J. Schubert and B. Luchtenburg have also informed me of their intentions to step down as well. That leaves plenty of room for some new blood on the Board. I hope that someone of you out there is willing to step up and take the reins forward. You will have ample help getting things done and the jobs are not really very difficult.

The Prez Sez by Jim Long



It is like the nightmare that never stops...! The current covid mess has shut everything down again. Nobody is going to come away from this without lots of bad memories that is for sure. The State Health's guidelines are more than just a little hazy. Sometimes I think that those people who are making all the decisions have no idea what they are really doing. I don't think they really think all these scenarios through completely. It is Einstein's simple theory of physics, 'For every action, there is an equal reaction!'. So before you start handing out guidelines, you really want to sit down and think things out to determine who all will be affected by your decision. If they would do a better job of that, perhaps there would be less confusion, hate and discontent.

For sure, it has affected us in the fact that we cannot hold meetings, which are the lifeline of our Club. I don't really know when this nightmare will end and we can get back together again. I am now hearing that the vaccine that is just around the corner, will be no guarantee that you can't still get it down the road. Covid will be like the flu, you will have to be vaccinated each year to avoid getting it, and even then, a certain percentage of the population will get it anyway, even if they were vaccinated. I fear greatly that there will never be a return to anything that we once knew as 'normal'...! This certainly was not what I had in mind for my final year as your President. We managed to get in only two meetings and one prospecting outing. That was it. There are no meetings being conducted by anyone now unless they are on Zoom or some other platform for video interaction. Unfortunately, those will not work for us. Our Newsletter is the only and the best means we have of communication for now. At least we have that!

As far as prospecting, I would remind everyone who wishes to do so, to in fact do so. There is zero chance of contracting covid when you are out on the creek or river by yourself and there is no one else around you. If you go with a family member or a good friend and practice reasonable social distancing, you probably won't even need a mask, although you should always carry your mask with you for those moments when someone may get too close for comfort. It is proven science that the virus fails to spread when you are outdoors and not in contact with anyone else. That is why everyone headed for the hills this summer. Unfortunately, they didn't carry masks with them and there was too many people going to the same places with little social distancing which led to infectious spreading because it only takes one person who is



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contagious to spread it. Again, easy to anticipate that was going to happen. But I have not heard of any of the prospectors' out and about contracting covid while digging for gold, and there have been a lot of folks out and about all summer long digging for the shiny, especially at Arapahoe Bar at Youngfield. Although it is true that the virus spreads better during the colder temperatures than it does in hotter temperatures, still, it requires people to help it spread, therefore, proper distancing is a key along with proper hand washing, and wearing those hated masks. For those wanting to do a little panning at home without going to the creek, there are a number of options to purchase pay dirt from vendors who are known and trustworthy. Odds are better than even that what you spend to buy your pay dirt will be the same if not less in many cases than what you would spend on fuel, food and supplies and equipment getting the same amount of gold going out to dig for it.

I do want to wish everyone a safe and merry Christmas and let us hope that 2021 brings a far better year!

Anyway.... that is the view from here and I wish you all Good Luck in your endeavors, no matter what they may be...! And until we meet again, keep your sunny sides up and may the bottoms of your pans turn bright with that treasured 'Yaller Gold'!

You may contact me at 303-452-6087 or at jnslong945@msn.com . Happy and safe prospecting to all!!!

The V.P. Corner by "Joe Fortunato"



Hello again to all our members. Well, here we are in December and who knows when we will have another monthly meeting. November just flew by in my world, and I haven't chased any gold since my Nevada trip in late October. I had been struggling to come up with a subject for my December article until a couple of days ago. That is when I read a post in the Detector Prospector Forum that I just had to share with all of you. It was written by a guy who is well known in the world of gold detecting, Keith Semanko, better known to many as "Lunk". It is a great lesson in a couple of ways. One is being persistent, the other is, nobody gets it all. What follows are his words.... "With the fantastic weather in the Rye Patch region during the month of October, I was chomping at the bit to get down there, but my summer job didn't end until the 30th. It still took me a few days afterward to get everything wrapped up, so I finally hit the road and met up with Gerry and friends at Rye Patch the following Tuesday. The detector training class we were scheduled to give that weekend ended up being cancelled, thanks to a winter storm that was forecast to move into the area on Friday. Needless to say, having only two days of optimal detecting conditions before being snowed out and forced to move on to Arizona, was a total bummer. Intent on finding a few bits of gold in-spite of the looming storm system and armed with our trusty Minelab GPZ 7000 gold detectors (and one SDC 2300 - also quite trusty, btw), we hit an old patch in hopes of digging up some previously overlooked yellow metal. Only two small nuggets were found after a couple of hours of searching with four coils on the ground - not a very good start. It was then that I remembered another old patch nearby that I had completely forgotten about, it had been so long since I had been there. It wasn't a very good producer back in the day, but perhaps we would be able to find a few nuggets that the VLF and early PI machines may have left behind. Within minutes of hitting the ground, my good friend Chef Rusty and I both popped a shallow sub-gram nugget, not a bad start. Soon, everyone was digging good gold! My second target gave an obvious yet deep sounding signal response from the GPZ's stock 14" coil. I imagined it to be a three or four gram piece at a depth of 12" to 18". Gerry noticed me digging quite an excavation and came over to capture the action on video. At a measured depth of 20", the target was finally out of the hole, and as I held it aloft there was an audible gasp from the audience that had gathered to watch, followed by cheers and fist-bumps: After a thorough cleaning, the specimen weighed in at a whopping 40 grams- a totally unexpected and pleasant surprise! The nuggets kept biting sporadically for everyone the rest of the day, and the same was repeated the following day. Just goes to show that sometimes the ZVT tech can really ignite an old burned-out nugget patch. Much fun was had by all, and it really made up for such a short two-day detecting trip. Pictured here are my finds, including the 40 gram chunk, a couple nuggets at over 8 grams, and all the small bits, with a total combined weight





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of over 66 grams.”.... Well, there you have it, quite an awesome adventure! I hope that all of our members are well, and wish you all a MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR!!! Until next time..... MAY ALL YOUR ADVENTURES BE.....GOLDEN!!! Questions or comments.... Call or Text me.... 303-263-7204 Joe Fortunato

From the Treasurer/Secretary Ledger by Joe Kafka



The Coronavirus has disrupted everything so whenever we are able to reconvene, the next Meeting will feature a nine (9) nugget giveaway, which will include a 2.4 gram nugget. We hope to have a new “Special Nugget’ by then as well. Be sure and bring extra cash for the nugget giveaways We will hopefully present the February winner of the special nugget their beautiful prize. The Club remains in the black and members may request to see the financial report at any time which I have at my desk in the back whenever we finally get to reconvene. Hope to see you all there at the next meeting..!!

Board Meeting Minutes From Nov 2020

James Long	Joe Shubert	Joe Fortunato	John Johnson
Mike Stevens	Joe Johnston	Chris Kafka	Brandon Luchtenburg
Joe Kafka	Bobby Manning	Andy Doll	Gary Hawley

THERE WAS NO BOARD MEETING FOR Nov DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC.
HOPE TO SEE YOU NEXT MONTH.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH FOR THE NEXT TIME WHENEVER WE MEET?

Subtract the # of electrons in an atom of gold from its atomic weight and that number is the answer to this month’s question.

2020 GPR Board of Directors Members

President

James ‘JJ’ Long

Vice President

Joe Fortunato

Secretary/Treasurer

Joe Kafka

2 Year Board Members

Joe Johnston (2017)

Joe Shubert (2018)

1 Year Board Members

Andy Doll

Brandon Luchtenburg

John Johnson II

Bobby Manning

Chris Kafka

Mike Stevens

Past President

Gary Hawley

General Meeting Minutes From Nov 2020

1. DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC, THERE WAS NO Dec MEETING.
2. Since it is highly unlikely that we will be meeting anytime in 2020, Club Elections will be postponed until we do meet again. There will be several openings on the Board. If you are interested in running for one of the Offices, please contact President Long at 303-907-3540 or jnslong945@msn.com and let him know of your interest. You can nominate yourself.
3. Positions that will be available are President, Vice President, and three Board positions; two one year positions and one two year position.. Each of these positions are quickly and easily trainable!!!



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A Miner's Laugh

Ralph, an old retired miner, and his wife Edna were both patients in a mental hospital. One day while they were walking past the hospital swimming pool, Ralph suddenly jumped into the deep end. He sank to the bottom of the pool and stayed there. Edna promptly jumped in to save him. She swam to the bottom and pulled him out. When the Head Nurse Director became aware of Edna's heroic act she immediately ordered her to be discharged from the hospital, as she now considered her to be mentally stable. When she went to tell Edna the news she said, 'Edna, I have good news and bad news. The good news is you're being discharged, since you were able to rationally respond to a crisis by jumping in and saving the life of the person you love I have concluded that your act displays sound mindedness.

The bad news is, Ralph hung himself in the bathroom with his bathrobe belt right after you saved him. I am so sorry, but he's dead.'

Edna replied, 'He didn't hang himself, I put him there to dry. How soon can I go home?'

(Taken from the internet and revised just for all us 'old miners')



The finds of the Month 2020:

Be sure to bring your finds of the month that you have collected since the **February meeting**. All those finds will be in competition when we can reconvene next, which may in fact, not be until May. The judging has started anew for the year 2020 and the November 2019 Finds are included in the 2020 contest.

Be sure to save all your winning items for the November 2020 judging.

Colorado Gold Mining During the Great Depression – the last hurrah of the small scale miners?

Gold mining in Colorado goes back a long way of course. One of the more interesting periods after the initial gold rushes is the Great Depression era of the 1930's. The industry went into the Great Depression in a weakened condition. In the 1920's inflation had made the cost of operation prohibitive for many small miners already. Interestingly, the conservative Republicans leading Colorado state government through the 20's did nothing to help the industry that had created the state. The early years of the Depression continued this theme until the New Deal programs were implemented by President Roosevelt and the Democrats in 1932. Funny how politics evolves over time right? Of course the government interventions would also have its disadvantages as we will see.

The first government actions were considered scandalous by some: requiring a federal permit to export gold, ordering citizens to turn their gold over to the banks in exchange for paper money and abolishing the right to own gold (in excess of two ounces or collectibles), and outlawing contract clauses that required payment in gold. These actions were intended to protect the value of the US dollar, which had been dropping as our gold reserves shrank. Soon after this on 1/31/1934 the price the government would pay for gold was increased to \$35 per ounce. This spurred excitement in the Colorado mining community and even in the public at large here. The government also suspended the requirement for yearly assessment work on mining claims from 1933-1939, reducing the paperwork requirements on small miners.

As you might guess, these changes led to a jump in gold production in Colorado! Gold production in 1934 jumped to over \$11 million after barely reaching \$6 million the prior year. Every year after that through the 30's the state produced at least \$12 million in gold, reaching a peak of \$19 million in 1939. Both hard rock mining and placer mining were rejuvenated in many mining districts across the state. Of course this new gold rush was like the earlier ones with lots of greenhorns trying their hand at it alongside more experienced miners. The greenhorns didn't know where to look, how to pan or any of the things needed to actually be successful. So the government stepped in. The New Deal in the form of the Works Progress Administration sponsored classes in "The Art of Placing" with both men and women taking the training. Of course many did not travel far with their gold pan or rocker box so the streams of metro-Denver were soon busy with new prospectors. The city of Denver even rented out rocker boxes for five cents a day to encourage the new diggers. Most folks only found "small amounts", which sounds funny to us when you learn they were finding about 5-6 grams per day! That was enough to feed your family so it was a real help in rough times. Then again, I think most of us would agree 5-6 grams per day would go a long way toward feeding a family now too since that is worth about \$300 in modern dollars.



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Of course other old mining districts beyond metro-Denver saw increased activity too. Small mines were reopened across the state and a few really big ones. A 1937 state report showed that the average placer miner in Colorado was finding 60 days to dig and was producing a little over 4 ounces of gold in that time. This suggests prospectors were often placer mining alongside some other job, at least in most cases. However, while interest in small scale placering remained high through the decade, the number of commercial scale placer mines declined as the decade unwound. By 1939 there were only 21 remaining across the state, employing only 119 full time miners. Some thrived throughout the decade, dredging in Summit County near Breckenridge and in Park County near Fairplay continued for example. Even the Happy Canyon placer drift mining operation in Douglas County drew commercial activity in the mid-decade (there's a reservoir on this spot today). Hard rock mining also thrived with over \$5 million produced in the Cripple Creek & Victor area in 1939 for example. Minor excitements occurred in other hard rock districts with new mines being started and old mine dumps being reprocessed as well. Higher gold prices and lower labor/material costs were a boon across the state.

Of course, we all know how this ends. World War II started for the US on December 7, 1941 but in some ways the war started much earlier. Armament production ramped up in the late 30's to provide the British military with much needed weapons. The increase in employment in military-related factories starting drawing labor away from mining in the late 30's. During this same period, the Federal government created a strategic metals reserve and started buying up copper, zinc and lead at premium prices. This led to an increase in base metals mining which drew miners out of the gold mines. Then war related shortages led to increased federal restrictions on gold mining. First came Order P-56 in March, 1942. This deprived gold mines of the ability to buy essential equipment and supplies, which were needed on a priority basis by mines producing strategic metals. Then a few months later came the knock-out blow. Gold Limitation Order L-280 in October, 1942 closed non-essential mines (gold and silver mostly). There was a loop hole for small mines which produced no more than 100 tons of ore per month however the inability to get essential supplies shut down many small mines as well. Finally, skilled miners were told they needed to switch over to essential metals mining or get drafted into the military; this pushed many more small hard rock gold mines to shut down. These restrictions were lifted as soon as the end of the war was in sight, in July 1945, but the damage had been done.

During the war years, many hard rock mines flooded, making them unsafe to restart without large investments. Those investments were hard to justify due to wage and supplies inflation during the war years. There was some increase in placer mining after the war but factory jobs were easy to find in those years and offered dependable, year-round paychecks. As precious metal mining faded, zinc, molybdenum and uranium took center stage in Colorado and would hold that role for decades.

Of course today, with gold prices hitting new highs and transportation costs at inflation-adjusted historic lows, mining has new opportunities. Several small-scale commercial placer mines have been working their way through the permitting process over the last couple years. At the moment, two new mills for hard rock ore are being built. One is in Clear Creek County and the other is in Jefferson County. So who knows, we may be on the verge of another modest boom in Colorado. Only time will tell. All I can say is get out there and "Find your gold!"

Kevin Singel, www.findinggoldincolorado.com

Sources: One Man's West by David Lavender & The Trail of Gold and Silver by Duane Smith

Gold to \$3000..???

by Matthew Worley

"Be fearful when others are greedy and greedy when others are fearful." – Warren Buffet

Oftentimes a well-timed deep breath can be of critical importance. Our brains, wonderful machines that they are, often operate by making snap analogies. This allows us to automatic mundane tasks such as putting on a pair of pants, tying our shoes, or brushing our teeth. The brainpower that we would expend in figuring out which pant leg to put on first or where to begin brushing our teeth (Hand up, I'm a top left guy) can thus be saved for more important tasks. This mental efficiency is a key design feature of the most awe-inspiring control center in the natural world...but every system has flaws. Oftentimes we don't recognize the need to take that well-timed deep breath because our brains operate so efficiently. We carry on with our activities, building our choice on top on another until we are confronted with the need to reassess the whole chain of decisions, like a man lost in thought who walks without marking where he is going until he realized that he is lost. It seems this type of random walk takes place often in financial markets. I believe we are now seeing a wandering soul in the S&P 500. We have seen the S&P 500 bounce off the covid-19 lows and rise 7.8% since April 20th. Two months of shelter-in-place has left us as a people with a fervent desire to get back to life as we know it, so



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this optimistic bounce in equalities makes sense psychologically. That same date, however, saw publications of a research report from the Bank of America commodities team entitled “18 month gold target lifted from \$2000 to \$3000/oz.” Yet the price of gold has increased to a much smaller extent versus that S&P 500 rally, only gaining 2.5% to \$1,734/oz. So far, the wandering man has been in control. Can the price movement in the S&P 500 persist and Bank of America’s gold price target be accurate? Can both make sense simultaneously from a fair value perspective?

Let’s dive into Bank of America’s report to better understand the rationale that drives a price target almost 50% above the previous gold high. “Due to the covid-19 lockdowns, US GDP could go down by 30% YoY in 2Q20, the steepest drop in modern history. Other countries like Japan will likely experience a 21.8% decline in output in @Q20, while China just reported a contraction of 6.8% in 1Q20. As central banks rush to expand their balance sheets and backstop asset values, and consumer prices, a lot of risks could end up being socialized. The size of major central bank balance sheets has been stable at around 25% of GDP for the last decade or so, just like the gold price. As economic output contracts sharply, fiscal outlays surge and central bank balance sheets double, fiat currencies could come under pressure.” – BoA Global Research Report, 4/20/2020.

The warning of a possible 30% drop in 2Q GDP is one echoed by the Congressional Budget Office, who predict a 40% 2Q GDP drop yoy and a -5.6% change in GDP over the entire year. The economic effects of covid-19 are not to be lightly dismissed. Another key point: this economic pain is not only localized to the U.S. as all developed countries will be negatively affected by this. Even more than the Great Recession that preceded it, the covid-19 Recession is a global recession. A global recession traditionally results in a huge run up in gold. Not only does the research not call for a high target price point, but it predicts 2021 gold spot price on average @2012/oz. Not known for aggressive forecasts in recent years, Bank of America nonetheless predicts an average price of gold in the entire year of 2021, at a price of the historical high. It’s one thing to anticipate a high price at some point, it’s an even greater testament to the research team’s comfort with this forecast for them to raise their data point that is more conservative by nature to a level 15% more than current spot price. The report highlights the relationship of Central Bank balance sheets to gold prices, linking them with high correlations. A lot of things don’t make sense these days, but this does: more national debt is being piled on to the dollar. If we trust this correlation and trust the Congressional Budget Office’s prediction of \$3.7 trillion deficit this year (this will comfortably more than double our worst annual deficit to date!), the Keynesian economic system of thought would indeed call for huge downward pressure on the US Dollar. The US Dollar has enjoyed an unrivaled power against other major currencies through the last decade. Retaining status as the world reserve currency, the USD gets bought up during good times and bad alike. Several sources attest to the continued place at the top of the greenback, but also hint at some apparent weaknesses too. It isn’t simply the ballooning balance sheet of the Fed, or the massive federal deficit that are concerns: foreign interests have strong reasons for collaborating to weaken Kind Dollar. Many of us have never experienced what it is to live in a country with a weak currency, a country where economic activity within the country ebbs and flows as foreign investment rushes in when times are good and rushes out even more quickly when risks are apparent. Venezuela and Argentina are models for this state: a hotbed of hyperinflation, corruption and unrest. Can the United States stave off her enemies at home (raising debt, unemployment and financial gravity for the dollar) and abroad (divergent foreign interests)?

Here we take a well-timed deep breath to reassess where we are and ensure the vision of the future aligns logically with reality. In my article “The Bull Case for Gold” published April 1st of this year (*you can google it*), we explored together the critical reason why gold was on the cusp of the traditionally recessionary bull market but had not yet risen: Fear in an environment of hyper-expanded money supply. The reasoning was that covid-19 would almost certainly lead to a recession and complimentary rise in the price of gold, but that there is always a lag historically, and moreover the Great Recession had expanded the money supply to such an extent that this lag could well last longer than is traditional. After seeing gold prices drop by .56% in March, we have seen them rise 6.43% since. This price action puts reality in-line with expectations and gives credence to Bank of America’s price target and average spot price forecasts. The most likely event is not that we have a V-shaped, quick economic recovery, but more of a U-shaped, prolonged bottoming out before we rebound. As restlessness grows and impatience for the “old days” swells, distrust in the financial system and flight to safe haven assets will inevitably follow. Don’t let the stock market rally fool you: real fear has re-entered the market place. Protests and riots are taking place with increasing frequency. People are restless after the shelter-in-place restrictions. Unemployment figures to be released are expected to mark the national figure from 15% -20%. This figure is higher than at the worst point in the Great Depression...and it happened in only three months. Our own government agency tasked with budgeting predict our worst ever GDP decrease this year. It is entirely your choice how you will navigate these



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times financially. *A man who walks without thought may possibly reach his goal...but how much more quickly will a man reach his goal who keeps his head and walks deliberately and confidently?*

Matthew Worley is a seasoned financial writer with published work on equities, commodities, currencies, and macro and geopolitical concerns in publications such as Forbes (as a ghost writer), Motley Fool, and Investopedia among others.

(And this is why I get headaches when I try to read these types of financial analogies, especially concerning the gold markets...it is like taking in a completely different language....lol....Pres. Long)

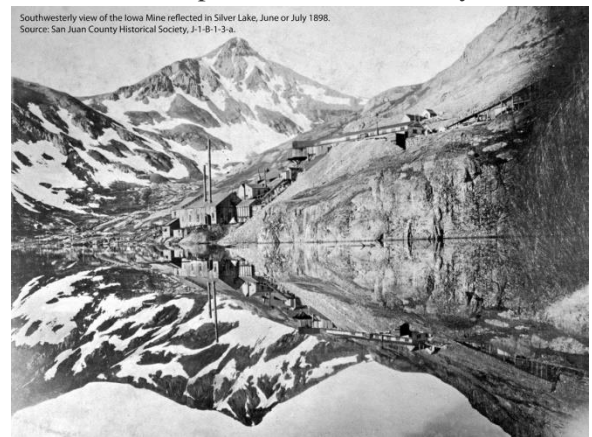
Silver Lake Basin: A Mining Chronicle Published in the 2016 Mining History Journal By Larry Godwin

(Part 1: Early Prospecting and Mining)

Silver Lake, which early settlers called Arrastra Lake, lies in a basin at the head of Arrastra Creek, four miles southeast of Silverton, Colorado, near the center of the Las Animas Mining District, in what was then part of La Plata County.

On June 15, 1871, prospectors created the Las Animas Mining District as a primitive form of frontier government to regulate claim activity throughout the vast Animas River drainage. During its first several years, explorers on the floor of Arrastra Gulch must have gazed up and south at the imposing headwall and wondered what lay beyond. Snow and ice locked in the precipice for all but a few months each year, discouraging exploration. In 1875 a handful of independent explorers made the dangerous ascent into the upper reaches of Arrastra Basin.

The following year, John Reed became the first documented prospector to scout a route up the headwall. On the other side, he found a hanging valley carved by glaciers, between North Star and other summits to the east and Kendall Peak and Round Mountain to the west. Their flanks, with 1,000 feet of relief, were sheer and rugged, and the mountaintops presented a lacework of veins and dykes. At the valley's center lay what was at that time a pristine glacial lake, about 40 acres in size, surrounded on most sides by exposed bedrock, with its outflow cascading northward until it roared over the valley's craggy headwall into Arrastra Gulch. Examining the flank of Round Mountain on the valley's west side, Reed quickly found several veins that carried silver, lead, and copper. He staked two claims on Round Mountain, which he named the Whale and the Round Mountain, as well as a third, the Silver Lake, on the northwest side of the lake. Also in 1876 an unknown prospector working at the hanging valley's head identified a huge fault up Arrastra Gulch just south of the lake and traced it southwest, where it disclosed a vein he claimed as the Buckeye. During that summer, both he and Reed excavated shallow workings to prove ore and retain title to their properties, then left for the season. When the men returned the following year, Silver Lake Basin, as the valley came to be known, saw its first production, which the owners shipped by burro to the Greene Smelter just north of Silverton. However, the volume of payrock was insignificant considering the arduous and perilous approach, which hindered Reed and the other prospector from packing much out and from importing any beyond the most essential materials, limiting output. That year also saw Jonathan Crooke and his brother, Lewis, purchase the Royal Tiger claim on the southeast side of Silver Lake, which they began working in 1877. In 1878 they sold a controlling interest to McPherson Lemoyne. Meanwhile the original miners labored on the Buckeye for approximately three years and, although they had not exhausted the vein, that holding fell silent around 1879. Silver Lake Basin pulsed with activity in 1881. A few other prospectors made the hazardous ascent into the cirque, where they examined the east flank of Kendall Peak a short distance south of Reed's ground. After climbing rock cornices, they found a rich vein directly west across the lake from the Royal Tiger, staked it with the Iowa and Stag claims, and blasted a tunnel and shaft to explore the lode at depth. At the end of the season, the party had samples assayed in Silverton. The report found the ore was rich not only with silver and industrial metals but also gold. The next year the group returned and began production. The members persuaded a crew of ten or so miners to make the sheer cliff at the Iowa their home for the working season and carried up all the supplies and lumber necessary to build a basic surface plant. By 1881 early prospectors had claimed the four significant properties in Silver Lake Basin: the Silver Lake, the Buckeye, the Royal Tiger, and the Iowa. While the Iowa miners acclimated, John Reed toiled on his adjoining Silver Lake real estate a short distance to the north. During 1880 and 1881, he traced the Silver Lake vein for a considerable distance with shallow excavations hewed into solid bedrock. In the short working season of 1882 he



Southwesterly view of the Iowa Mine reflected in Silver Lake, June or July 1898.
Source: San Juan County Historical Society, J-1-B-1-3 a



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generated several tons of ore from a tunnel he drove at a snail-like pace directly on the vein for a distance of around fifty feet. Remaining in the basin for the winter, with its heavy snows, would constitute a life-threatening event, forcing him and other miners down each autumn. During a stay in Silverton in 1883, Reed convinced John W. Collins that his Silver Lake and Round Mountain claims would pay well, if worked, but they required additional investment. For a share of the Silver Lake, Collins joined Reed to form a partnership, and that summer the men scrambled into the basin to resume production. They packed in enough lumber and equipment to build a small blacksmith shop and cabin, and hired three or four miners to begin a second tunnel. Once they reached the vein, the party extracted more or less five tons of material per day and hauled it down to Sweet's Sampler in Silverton. About that time, on the east side of the basin, Julius Johnson cut a tunnel deep into the Royal Tiger claim. An old-time prospector, he had leased the property from McPherson Lemoyne. His contract ended in roughly 1883, when Lemoyne sold the Royal Tiger to Edward Innis, who hoped to approach his fabled lake of gold from the opposite side of King Solomon Mountain should his Highland Mary Mine, located at the east end of Royal Tiger Basin, fail to make a discovery. However, by 1885 activity in Silver Lake Basin had slowed, probably due to the national recession that began in March 1882 and lasted until May 1885, coupled with difficulties the extreme terrain posed. Reed and Collins stopped work at the Silver Lake Mine, and around that year the Iowa also became idle. The Royal Tiger remained the only active operation. Otto Mears, wagon-road and railroad magnate known as the Pathfinder of the San Juan, initiated his interest in the mining industry in 1886 by leasing the Buckeye, which had been dormant since around 1879. He constructed the best surface plant in the basin to sustain a crew of ten in order to produce all year long. Relative to the era, the Buckeye Mining Company was progressive, boasting a ventilation blower that forced air underground and warming boxes so miners could thaw frozen dynamite prior to use. The mine worked at full capacity in 1887 but two years later, Mears quit his contract and closed the property. In 1888 Benjamin W. Thayer and James H. Robin examined the Iowa Mine, located a few hundred feet above lake level directly south of the Silver Lake. They found a vein that offered an unusual combination of gold, silver, and galena, the principal ore of lead. The partners leased the ground the following year, began production, and benefited when Congress passed the Sherman Silver Purchase Act of 1890, which required the U.S. government to buy nearly twice as much of that metal as before for coining silver dollars. The legislation restored silver's market price and raised the value of the Iowa's ore. Thayer and Robin boosted their workforce to expedite development and then discovered a second vein of galena, which ensured greater profits. (Next month, we will feature Part 2 of this Chronicle, The Stoiber Era)

The man who found Forrest Fenn's treasure wanted to be anonymous. A lawsuit compelled him to go public

Scottie Andrew, CNN • Published 7th December 2020

The treasure hunter who solved Forrest Fenn's famed treasure hunt in the Rocky Mountains has come forward -- though if he'd had his way, he would've stayed anonymous.

Jack Stuef, a 32-year-old medical student from Michigan, revealed that he found Fenn's treasure chest -- a claim Fenn's family independently verified with Outside magazine, which interviewed Stuef. He disclosed his identity because a recent lawsuit would make his name public, he said.

He's not willing, though, to part with the treasure's secrets and the clues that led him to it.

Fenn's infamous treasure hunt began 10 years ago, when the author published a cryptic poem in his autobiography meant to lead prospective explorers to the spot in the Wyoming wilderness where his treasure chest was hidden. Fenn estimated over 350,000 people searched for the chest, and a few even died on their journey.

A treasure chest hidden in the Rocky Mountains for a decade has finally been found

Stuef spent two years searching for Fenn's treasure, which included gold, jewelry and other artifacts believed to total over \$1 million. He finally found it in the Wyoming wilderness in June.

Fenn kept Stuef's identity secret then, at Stuef's request. He described Stuef only as a man from "back East."

Stuef said he was worried about the safety of his family. "For the past six months, I have remained anonymous, not because I have anything to hide, but because Forrest and his family endured stalkers, death threats, home invasions, frivolous lawsuits, and a potential kidnapping -- all at the hands of people with delusions related to his treasure," Stuef wrote in a Medium post. "I don't want those things to happen to me and my family."

Forrest Fenn, who sent explorers on a famed Rocky Mountain treasure hunt, dies at 90



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Shortly before Fenn's death in September, a woman filed a suit and said whoever found the treasure had done so by hacking her texts and emails, Stuef told Outside magazine. Since Fenn has since died, his subpoena can be transferred to his heirs, who were formerly the only people who knew Stuef had found the treasure.

Stuef denied the charges to Outside magazine.

Since finding the treasure, Stuef said in his Medium post that he moved to a "more secure building with guards and multiple levels of security" to protect himself. He doesn't have the treasure, either -- it's in a vault in New Mexico, where it will remain until he sells it.

Stuef said he'll never reveal the location where he found the chest to preserve the wildlife there and prevent other explorers from following his trail, which could be dangerous.

Unlike Fenn, who welcomed the attention from fellow treasure hunters, Stuef said he's not looking to meet with anyone regarding his find. Despite the lawsuit and the potential for a negative response from his fellow explorers, Stuef said he's "optimistic that this experience will still be a positive chapter in my



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3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18 Martin Luther King Jr Day	19	20 GPR Club Meeting??	21	22	23
24/31	5	26	27	28	29	30