

# THE GOLD NUGGET

Aug 2022

## The Prez Sez! by Joe Johnston



August 1<sup>st</sup> is “Colorado Day”. Colorado became a State on August 1, 1876, and that is why we are known as the “Centennial State”. Look for free admission at museums, Zoo’s, State parks etc.

Here we are entering the ‘dog days of August’ with hot weather still the norm. This means we are entering the last half of prospecting season with gas prices high, requiring us to plan carefully to make our outings affordable. While out in the field remember to be safe and hydrate before you feel like you need a drink of water. Also keep in mind that everyone lives downstream, no matter how clear the water is; unknown material has been introduced upstream. So when you get that picker or beautiful garnet, see that you clean it properly and not by placing in your mouth to clean and examine it (I have actually seen and heard of people doing that) long sleeve prospecting gloves are also a good choice. We have scheduled the **Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety** to speak on mining permits, prospecting, do’s

and don’ts, where the line is on dredging, etc. at our August 17th meeting. September 5<sup>th</sup> is Labor Day, so plan ahead. Until then, may your detector guide you to that epic find and your gold pan overflow with that golden mineral.

I can be reached at [cjoej1@peoplepc.com](mailto:cjoej1@peoplepc.com) or 303-888-5417.

## Vice President’s Corner! by Mike Stevens



Hot temps have made their presence all too often this summer. As I’ve aged, I definitely don’t tolerate the heat like I used to. The sun can be extremely punishing, so I try to remember to apply sunscreen, wear a hat and on my last trip up the hill I have to remind myself of the importance of hydration. I have always been a person who sweats easily, often to the point of discomfort. There have been times where I haven’t listened to the cues my body is sending out and have felt lightheaded and almost gotten myself into trouble. While it is fun to get dirt, if you don’t listen to your body you may miss out on the excitement of cleaning up a pan and seeing what golden possibilities it may hold. So be aware of the heat and the importance of staying hydrated. If you find that you are not feeling well while digging, stop for a while, sit in the shade if possible, drink a good amount of water or Gatorade and have a little something to

eat. When you’re starting to feel better, slowly resume your activity, making sure to continue drinking water and taking occasional breaks while you’re digging, hauling and cleaning that wonderful dirt. So please stay safe! Golden smiles for All!!!

## From the Treasurer/Secretary Ledger by Joe Kafka



It was nice to see everyone at the July meeting. The Club remains in the black and members may request to see the financial report at any time which I have at my table in the back whenever you wish to see it. Hope to see you all at the next meeting in August when we will again be giving away nine more gold nuggets, the largest of which is around 2.4 grams!! Don’t forget to buy your ‘Special nugget tickets as well. See you all in August!

## Board Meeting Minutes From July 2022

X	Joe Johnston	X	Andy Doll	X	Robert Ahr	X	Gordon Smith
X	Mike Stevens	X	Joe Kafka	X	Kathy Lemuel		Mike Hurtado
X	Bobby Manning	X	Chris Kafka	X	Kevin Singel		James Long

**Quorum Present:** \_Yes\_.

**Call to Order by:** \_Pres Johnston\_ at \_6:01\_pm\_.

**Reading and Approval of Minutes:** Corrections: \_none\_ Approved as read/corrected: \_Yes\_.

**Treasurer’s Report:** Questions: \_none\_ Approved: \_Yes\_.

**Correspondence:** phone calls \_1\_ e-mails \_0\_ mail \_0\_.

### QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Gold nanoparticles are used in the COVID-19 antigens and antibody tests.....True or False..?



## Gold Prospectors of the Rockies Page 2

**Webmaster:** Total hits 161974 Hits in last 30 days 235

**Committee Reports:** Outings planning remains ongoing. R. Ahr and Shelly Z. have been working on updating the membership list, thanks for the hard work.

**Unfinished Business:** The Tri-fold Flyers progress has stalled and will be reassigned. Speakers for August will be the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety. In September, Kevin Singel will speak on prospecting in Puerto Rico.

**New Business:** Turn Over Folders: each committee position to make one up for that position detailing what is done by that position to facilitate smooth turnover to the next chair in the future. Have it ready for review in August. Housekeeping: we will begin review of the Bylaws at a future meeting. Member packet: would like to have one for new/existing members (bylaws, awards, general introductory Infor.)

**Planned Outings:** The Outing Schedule has been pretty much established and Andy has published it with the Newsletter. We will continue to schedule as opportunities arrive.

- July 23 Outing in black Hawk is set. Be cautious due to high water.
- Aug 20 Outing is scheduled for Black Hawk.
- Sept 8,9,10 Panning Demo at Hylands Ranch, see sign-up at front table..
- Sept 17 Panning Class being planned by Kevin Singel

**Board Members Items of Discussion:** Pres Johnston advised that former member David Hoots has donated a high banker to the Club to use or sell. Board will decide what to do. The Board determined that BM Manning will hold the Club gold. BM Manning advised that gold prices are currently pretty low. BM Doll advised that the Web Site was coming up for renewal and he will arrange payment. BM Ahr advised Members List was ready to print and he would like a sign up for the Xmas Pot Luck. BM Singel planning another Beginner Panning Class for Sept. BM C. Kafka advised that the Club Picnic will not take place this year.

**Tonight's General Meeting Program:** We have Tony Frangella (5280 Adventures) and Ken King (Adventures in Dirt).

Announcements: Next Board Meeting 08/17/22 at 6:00pm. Next General Meeting: 08/17/22 at 7:00pm

Adjournment: Meeting stands adjourned at 6:55 pm.

**"The older I get the more wisdom I find in the ancient rule of taking first things first. A process which often reduces the most complex human problem to a manageable proportion."**

**DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER**

### 2022 GPR Board of Directors Members

#### President

Joe Johnston

#### Vice President

Mike Stevens

#### Secretary/Treasurer

Joe Kafka

#### 2 Year Board Members

Bobby Manning (2023)

#### 1 Year Board Members

Andy Doll

Chris Kafka

Robert Ahr

Kevin Singel

Kathy Lemuel

Gordon Smith

Mike Hurtado

#### Past President

James Long

## General Meeting Minutes From July 2022

1 Meeting was opened at 7:10 pm by Pres. Johnston with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Pres. Johnston then announced that the evening Program was Tony Frangella (5280 Adventures) and Jeff Lubert (Adventures in Dirt).

3. Pres. Johnston then gave the Metals Report: Gold 1712.80, Silver 18.75, Platinum 875.00, Palladium 1804.00, Rhodium 14100.00.

4. Web hits for last month was 235.

5. Treasurer Joe Kafka advised that the Club remains in the black. Report is available for review for anyone who wishes to see it. Also, don't forget to buy tickets for tonight's 9 nuggets drawing, the largest being 2.4 grams. We have a new 'Special Nugget' coming soon.

6. Robert Ahr and Shelly Zornes reported that we had 32 members in attendance. There was 1 guest present tonight. The total meeting attendance was 33.

7. Pres. Johnston read the 'Question of the Month', which was "...On how many continents has gold been found...? The Winners will receive an extra ticket to the gold nugget drawings later during the evening program.



### Gold Prospectors of the Rockies Page 3

8. **Pres. Johnston** advised that there was time to enter items at the break for the '**Finds of the Month**' table and that the monthly winners from tonight will need to be saved for the Finds of the Year competition in November, 2022. A reminder to all that their gold submissions need to be weighed dry and only one submission per person per category. Be sure to fill out the entry cards completely. Only finds found within the last 30 days may be submitted.
9. **Gordon Smith** announced the '**Cache Clue #7**'. You must be present at the meeting in order to get the Cache clues
10. **Jenni Dehmlow** advised that the Club Store had numerous items for sale. Be sure to drop by at the break and support your Club by buying something. We have some more of our gold bags also.
11. **Pres. Johnston** informed the membership that the **Schedule of Outings** has been completed and posted in the Newsletter. There is room to add more Outings as the Year progresses. Volunteers are needed for the Panning Demo at Hylands Ranch in September. A sign-up sheet is on the Front Table.
12. **Pres. Johnston** announced that the **Aurora Water Festival Panning Demonstration** went well. The dig in black Hawk on the 18<sup>th</sup> is on.
13. There was a reminder to be sure to vote on the Finds of the Month and to answer the Question of the Month during the break Members who check things out of the Club Library are reminded to return them promptly. Don't forget to donate to the Refreshment Table. There was nothing added from the Floor.
14. **Pres. Johnston** announced the break at 8:15 pm. Meeting was called back to order at 8:30 pm.
15. **Pres. Johnston** announced the winners of the '**Question of the Month**'. The answer was, "**...Seven...!** There were a total of 5 winners who received an extra ticket for the upcoming gold drawings.
16. **Pres. Johnston** announced the winners for the '**Finds of the Month**' for **May 2022**. Those were:
  - **Best Coin** – **Joe Johnston** with a 1941 Lincoln penny he found in Aurora, Colo.
  - **Best Jewelry** – There was no entry in this category for this month.
  - **Best Mineral** – **Connie Cantrell** with a pyrite sample she found near Lathrop, Colorado.
  - **Best Artifact** – There was no entry in this category for this month.
  - **Best Bottle** – There was no entry in this category for this month.
  - **Most Raw Gold** – **Dennis Perederin** with 0.16 grams of gold he found on the Black Hawk dig.
  - **Largest Raw Gold** – There was no entry in this category for this month.
17. **Pres. Johnston** concluded the evening with drawings for the numerous door prizes donated by the **GPR JJ Long, and Kevin Singel**, followed by the drawing for 9 gold nuggets. Pres. Johnston also wants to remind that holders of drawing tickets for the Regular gold drawings who did not win and want to redeem those tickets may present them at the end of the Meeting and they will be reimbursed at .01 cents on the dollar, or they shall be considered to have been donated back to the Club.
18. **Pres. Johnston** then held the drawing for the 'Special Nugget' and the winner was **Mike Stevens**. Congratulations to Mike.
19. **Pres. Johnston** reminds the members that sometimes during the meetings, The President's time is overwhelmingly taken up by the many who wish to speak to him and he apologizes if anyone ever feels like he is unavailable. It is not his intent to be inaccessible and he encourages anyone with questions to contact him by e-mail or phone outside the meetings at any time. His e-mail and phone number are on the web site.
20. **Pres. Johnston** thanked **Greg and Nancy Knerl** and all those who contributed to the Refreshment Table. All members are encouraged to chip in and add to the spread each month. Don't forget the 'tip jar' also, which helps to defray costs. This really helps the folks who run the table and those who volunteer up front each month. The Club appreciates the efforts of each and every one of you to make the refreshment table enjoyable.
21. The August Meeting Program will be a presentation by the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety. Having nothing further at this time, remember to prospect safely, and we will see you all at the next get together.
22. **Meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.**

### A Miner's Laugh

The son of a local miner well known for his ornery behavior, got onto a bus and took a seat next to a man reading a black book. He noticed that the man had his collar on backwards. The little boy asked him why his collar was on backwards. The man, who was a priest said, "I am a Father." The little boy





## Gold Prospectors of the Rockies Page 4

replied, “My daddy is also a father but he doesn’t wear his collar like that.” The priest looked up from his book and answered, “I am the Father of many.” The boy said, “my father has 4 boys, 4 girls and two grandchildren and he doesn’t wear his collar that way.” The priest now getting rather impatient, said, “I am the Father of hundreds”, and went back to his book. The little boy quietly thought about that for a few minutes, then leaned over and whispered, “Maybe you should wear a condom and put your pants on backwards instead of your collar..!” Apparently, the apple does not fall far from the tree in this mining family....!!

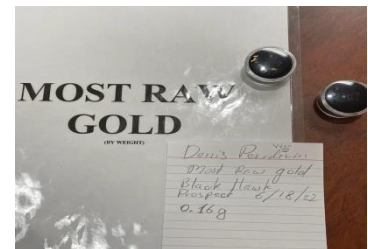
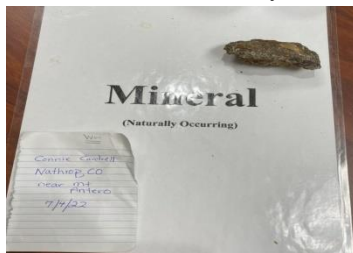
*(Taken from the internet and revised just for all us 'old miners')*

## The finds of the Month July 2021:

Contest runs from November 2021 thru October 2022. We will be looking forward to seeing what you folks have found since last November.

- **Best Coin** – **Joe Johnston** with a 1941 Lincoln cent he found while metal detecting in Aurora, Colo.
- **Best Jewelry** – There was no entry in this category for this month.
- **Best Mineral** – **Connie Cantrell** with a quartz/calcite sample she found near Mt. Antero in Colo.
- **Best Artifact** – There was no entry in this category for this month.
- **Best Bottle** – There was no entry in this category for this month.
- **Most Raw Gold** – **Dennis Perederin** with 0.16 grams of gold he found in Black Hawk, Colo.
- **Largest Raw Gold** – There was no entry in this category for this month.

Be sure to bring any Finds that you have found in the last 30 days since the last meeting. You must list the date that you found the item and the area you found it when you submit it. Each monthly winner must save your winning Find and submit them in **November of 2022** for the **Find of the Year** in each category.



## July Gold Dig Outing

Our monthly gold digging party took place up on the mountain on July 23. The attendees had some warm weather for the morning and then things cooled off late in the day with some good rain showers. But the morning dig proved that we are still on the gold. So for you newer members who want to get your hands a little dirty, there is plenty of room and still plenty of gold to find. The claim has changed a little over the last couple of years but when you are wise to the way that gold moves and settles it is really not too big a problem finding it. Our biggest change has come from the construction on the Peaks to Plains Trail system in Clear Creek Canyon which has resulted in an awful lot of folks coming up just looking for places along the Creek to park and recreate. That has resulted in fewer opportunities to process our material which is dug dry. But for those who wait a day or so and hit the Creek during the week, there is usually plenty of room. Thanks to Jack Meineke for the photos!



## Extremist Groups Are at it Again

As can be expected, environmental extremist groups have filed suit to stop another mining project. This time, it’s the Excellon Idaho Gold’s Kilgore Gold Exploration Project in Clark County, Idaho. Some of the usual suspects are involved



## Gold Prospectors of the Rockies Page 5

again, the Idaho Conservation League and the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. The groups claim that the US Forest Service violated environmental laws when they approved exploratory drilling. They claim the Forest Service should have opted for a complete Environmental Impact Statement (EIR) rather than following an Executive Order issued by former President Trump that expedited the process. *(Another example of the current administration and their followers doing everything they can to undo everything that President Trump did during his term....JJ)*

## No Sales Tax on Precious Metals

Tennessee became the 42<sup>nd</sup> state to eliminate sales taxes on precious metals on May 27, 2022. Lead bill sponsor Bud Hulseby said, "I've been working to free gold and silver from sales taxes in Tennessee since my kids were in elementary school. The Sound Money Defense League, in-state dealers and folks all across Tennessee have made their voices heard and have helped to get this bill across the finish line. The only states that still tax precious metal coins and bullion are Vermont, New Jersey, Maine, Kentucky, Wisconsin, New Mexico, Mississippi and Hawaii. The District of Columbia also taxes physical gold and silver purchases.

## Uganda discovers gold deposits worth 12 Trillion USD

As reported by the *Mining Review*

*Africa* Jun 29, 2022

Uganda announced that it had discovered 31 million metric tons of gold waiting to be mined in the country after several surveys were conducted. A spokesperson from the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development in Uganda, Solomon Muyita, said that these reports are aimed at attracting gold miners and investors in the crypto sector. In a bid to boost the country's economy, the Ugandan government has licensed Wagagai gold mining company, a Chinese firm to start producing gold products in Busia district. The company embarked on the construction of its gold refinery valued at USD200m in phases in the district in 2016. Muyita said that the discovered gold could start being mined immediately. Refining gold locally could enhance job creation, and improve social service delivery to those living close to where the mineral is extracted. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has called for the local refinement of the commodity, calling any external refinery criminal. "It is criminal for anybody to argue for the continued exports of raw materials in Africa, when there is 90% more value in that product that you are giving to the outsiders" he said. Tan Chun Chi, the general manager of Wagagai gold mining company, says that the investment has reached US \$60 million. He explains that they have been lagging behind in the construction due to the lack of the two licenses. The company has recently obtained a gold production license in March this year and has a 21-year lease to mine gold in the country. and expect to double their speed because they expect to begin gold production by July 2023.



"If this is indeed the volume that we have, it is time to clean our house, and do business, in developing ourselves and our country, by going to the middle income status and beyond." said Winnie Ngabirwe Mineral Development

## Goldstone reports armed robbery at its gold mine in Ghana

As reported by Vladimir

Basov Wednesday June 29, 2022 for Kitco News

Ghana-focused gold producer and developer GoldStone Resources (AIM: GRL) confirmed today that an armed robbery took place at its Homase site, which, whilst no-one was hurt, resulted in a loss of gold with a value of approximately US \$350 thousand. "Whilst this loss is not expected to have a material impact on the financial performance of the business, the company was not in a position to make an announcement that was compliant with the AIM Rules, which led to a suspension in the trading of its ordinary shares on AIM whilst an investigation was launched by the authorities in Ghana," the company said in its press-release.

The company noted that the investigation into the robbery is ongoing and, concurrently, GoldStone is reviewing its security protocols, adding that a new security company has been appointed and additional security measures are being implemented on an urgent basis to enhance protection for the company's operations, assets and personnel moving forward. Goldstone pointed out that these issues are causing some short-term disruption to operations, which are expected to continue into the third quarter 2022, but the company expects to maintain regular production of gold ore throughout the remainder of 2022.

Goldstone Resources is an AIM quoted resource development company with projects in West Africa. The company has a portfolio of gold projects, from exploration to near term development, the principal being the Akrokeri-Homase project in



## Gold Prospectors of the Rockies Page 6

south-western Ghana, which lies approximately 8 km along strike from the Obuasi gold mine, one of the world's major gold mines with a total historical and current resource in excess of 70M oz Au.

## Club Performs Panning Demo

On July 17, 2022, The Club performed a gold panning demo for a private party consisting of law librarians from all around the country. The event was attended by some 250-300 people and was hosted by Bloomberg Law. The event took place at 1200 N. Broadway at the Colorado History Museum and was held in Colorado Room. A good time was had by all and there was a lot of interest in the panning booth. A lot of the attendees had no real knowledge of Colorado's mining history or of mining in general. They asked a lot of questions about gold and mining and fortunately, actually no big surprise, we had all the right answers. Many of them were quite interested in the artifacts that we displayed showing the types of trash and contaminants that we take out of the rivers and streams and we received a lot of very positive comments regarding the process. Some of these folks were surprised to discover that we still do this sort of thing and, of course, they were delighted to see the shiny gold show up in those gold pans. Past President JJ Long and Jack Meineke manned the booth and took photos.



## Want to Find Lost Treasure?

*From the first time man began recording history and events, hidden and buried treasure has always been a subject to pique interest. Man has always been an adventurous creature and the lure of treasure has been a draw that has pulled many an adventurer to try their luck. But it can certainly be a hazardous adventure to say the least. The recent treasure hunt started by the late Forest Fenn is a good example. Several folks lost their lives, including one or two from Colorado, following their dreams of finding treasure. So here are a couple more for you to read and enjoy, but remember, treasure hunting does not come without hazardous risk and rarely do they have happy endings...! JJ*

## Seven of the Romanovs' Fabergé Eggs

One of the many mysteries surrounding the Romanovs is the case of the missing Fabergé eggs. In the late 19th century, gifting bejeweled eggs made by the House of Fabergé jewelry firm became an Easter tradition for imperial Russia's royal family. The czars Alexander III and Nicholas II commissioned 50 of the precious knick-knacks between them. During the Bolshevik's February Revolution in 1917, the Fabergé eggs were removed from the palace and taken to the Kremlin in Moscow. Many were later sold to raise funds for the Russian government, and today the whereabouts of seven imperial eggs are still unknown. It's possible that the current owners have no idea they're holding onto a priceless piece of history. Some years back, a scrap dealer found a sapphire-and-diamond-encrusted golden egg at an antique sale and bought it for \$13,302. He eventually learned it was one of the original Romanov eggs, and was valued at \$33 million.



## Amaro Pargo's Treasure



Spanish pirate Amaro Pargo is famous for his lost treasure. When he died in 1747, he left behind a will bequeathing a hoard of gold, silver, and precious gems to his niece. She likely wasn't too grateful for the gesture, however. Amaro didn't specify the location of his hoard, so his niece was never able to claim her inheritance. Since then, several places have been ransacked by people hoping to get rich off of Amaro's treasure. His former house in Spain and the cave he used as a hideout are both popular spots for treasure hunters, though if the bounty is there it's never been uncovered.



## Gold Prospectors of the Rockies Page 7

### The Flor de La Mar and Its Treasure

When the *Flor de La Mar* sank to the bottom of the Indian Ocean in 1512, it brought down a legendary treasure haul with it. The Portuguese ship was said to be carrying up to 60 tons of gold and 200 chests of diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and sapphires when it vanished during a storm. If found, the bounty on board would be worth billions today. Though many people have searched the seabed where *Flor de La Mar* may have ended up—with some even claiming to have found it—the shipwreck and its valuable contents remain lost.



*The topic of buried treasure is often reserved for Hollywood movies and page-turning beach reads, but we rarely hear about these hidden gems in real-life scenarios. Truth be told, stories of buried treasure come to the surface quite often, not to mention all of the secret riches that have yet to be discovered.*

*So let's look at a few treasures that have been found. All gold prospectors are really searching for treasure only they do most of their looking in creeks and rivers. Whether you're a true treasure hunter at heart or simply fascinated by the topic, most everyone can't resist the lure of reading about treasure. In fact, these might just inspire you to set off on your own treasure hunting adventure! JJ*

### A Walk to Remember

Some folks are on a constant mission to unearth buried treasure, while others are fortunate enough to stumble upon it unexpectedly. Back in 2013, an unsuspecting California-based couple took their dog for a walk and noticed a rusted can partially buried in the ground. They were shocked to find that the metal container was filled with \$20 gold coins. Upon further investigation, the couple found several more coin-filled cans buried nearby on their property. The coins were minted from 1847 to 1894, and much to the couple's surprise, there were nearly 1,400 \$20 pieces in total. Additionally, the duo discovered 50 \$10 coins and 4 \$5 pieces. While the worth of the collection would have been impressive even at face value, the going rate for a single coin was estimated at \$1 million. Coin expert David McCarty described the amazing discovery as “unheard of” in North America.



### Buried for a Good Cause

The Rocky Mountains may not be the first location that comes to mind when you think of hidden treasure troves, but late Air Force veteran and art dealer, Forrest Fenn, claimed to have buried a chest filled with \$1 million worth of diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and gold coins in the mountainous region during his early 80s. Although Fenn offered a few cryptic clues in the form of a poem to treasure hunters before his passing, the New Mexico-based millionaire was intent on keeping the exact location a secret. His reason? He wanted to encourage kids and their families to spend time outdoors enjoying nature. The treasure was ultimately found in Wyoming in 2020, a fact which was confirmed by Fenn's son. Unfortunately, the ‘finder’ was sued by several other treasure hunters and the matter is tied up in the courts. Unfortunately, searching for the loot, which had become known as the “Fenn Treasure,” had resulted in death for at least four hopeful hunters.



### Men (and Treasure) Overboard

There are countless stories of shipwrecks and valuables lost at sea, but the booty from one sunken ship continues to be found in bits and pieces. Dating back to 1622, a Spanish treasure ship called *La Nuestra Señora de Atocha* hit a coral reef during a devastating hurricane on a return trip from the Florida Keys to Spain. The vast majority of the crew members were swallowed by the sea, along with hundreds of millions worth of gold, silver, emeralds, and various coins.



Centuries later in 1985 treasure hunter Mel Fisher recovered \$500 million worth of the loot—only a fraction of the sunken trove. While there is much more to be recouped, Fisher now takes fellow treasure hunting enthusiasts on diving missions. While many coins have been recovered, the greater part of the riches remains at the bottom of the ocean.

### Returned to its Rightful Owners



## Gold Prospectors of the Rockies Page 8

Not everyone who unearths buried treasure has a finders-keepers mentality. In 2022, Matthew and Maria Emanuel were thrilled to discover a rusty metal box while planting trees on their property in Staten Island, New York. After fully uncovering the box, the couple realized they'd unearthed a safe filled with \$100 bills, along with precious and semi-precious gemstones, valued at \$52,000 in all. A neighbor's address scribbled on a piece of paper led the couple to the booty's rightful owners.

The Emanuel's neighbors were stunned to be reunited with their vault of valuables, which had been stolen from their home seven years prior.



*Happy hunting and remember, never go alone, but if you do, make sure you let someone know where you are going and when you will return. In some of these cases, your next of kin will need to know where to search for your body.....!!! JJ*

(Conclusion) **The Mystery of the Double Eagle Gold Coins** A Philadelphia family has some and the U.S. has been chasing them for 70 years. Why? By Susan Berfield

Two years after the auction, Joan Langbord and her son, Roy, an entertainment executive in Manhattan, called Berke, who had represented Fenton and the Farouk coin, with startling news: They said they had found 10 1933 Double Eagles. The coins had been wrapped in tissue and plastic, put in a gray paper bag from the department store John Wanamaker — which closed in 1995 — and placed at the bottom of safe deposit box No. 442 at a Wachovia Bank in Philadelphia. Langbord had inherited the safe deposit box from her mother and said she had thought it contained only jewelry. No one in the family, she later testified, knew how the coins had gotten there. The Langbords, through Berke, declined to comment for this story, citing ongoing litigation.

According to legal documents, the Langbords, hoping they could make a deal similar to Fenton's, asked Berke to contact the Mint. On Sept. 15, 2004, Berke met with Mint attorneys at the Secret Service offices in Brooklyn to discuss the situation. A week later, Roy Langbord, accompanied by Berke, opened the safe deposit box and handed over the Double Eagles to the government for authentication. The coins did not come back.

In June 2005, Berke was summoned to meet the Mint's attorneys in Washington. There they informed him that the 1933 Double Eagles were indeed authentic. But this time the Mint refused to offer any monetary settlement. Instead, the lawyers said the government was keeping the coins, and that they were already in Fort Knox. Berke protested, unsuccessfully. In August 2005 the Mint issued a press release announcing it had "recovered" 10 more 1933 Double Eagles.

"I was surprised," says Sotheby's Redden. "It was a little awkward. The Double Eagle had been billed by the Mint as unique." And not just by the Mint but by Sotheby's, too. "I called the buyer, who said: 'Do I have to buy those, too?' He hasn't had the chance. For months the Langbords sought the return of the coins, compensation from the government of \$40 million, or the initiation of forfeiture proceedings. The government insisted it was not required to do anything. In December 2006 the Langbords took the matter to the courts. Three years later, Judge Legrome Davis of the Federal District Court of Philadelphia ruled that the government had to show it had a right to keep the coins.

This July, eight years after the Langbords say they found the coins; the trial to get them back began at a Philadelphia courthouse, just blocks from the family store on Jewelers Row.

Joan Langbord, dressed simply in a tan pantsuit and costume jewelry, took the stand the morning of July 19. She was occasionally teary. She was also sharp-minded, plain-spoken, and slightly irritated. Describing the store, she said: "It looks like a junk shop. But expensive junk. It looks the way it did when my father ran it. His chair is still in the store." Only the first floor of the four-story building is open to those who walk in off the street.

Records introduced at the trial show she had visited the safe deposit box many times between 1996 and her discovery of the coins in 2003 — including the day before the Sotheby's auction. She said she made the visits to select pieces of her mother's jewelry to sell to a longtime customer and that she never noticed the Wanamaker bag at the bottom. It was only when the box warped and had to be drilled open, she said, that she realized the coins were there. The safe deposit box was shown at the trial: It was about the size of a violin case.

After Langbord testified, the judge called for a lunch break, and she and her other son, David, went to the store. It's still called I. Switt & Ed Silver, though her name and that of her business partner are also in gold letters on the front door. She walked in briskly and got right on the phone about a business matter, pointedly ignoring visitors. The old wood and glass counters were filled with jewelry, silver candlesticks, watches, figurines. A cash register from the 1930s sat on another





## Gold Prospectors of the Rockies Page 9

counter. Yellowing family photos hung askew on the wall next to a 2009 Philadelphia Inquirer article about the gold coins.

On day five of the trial, U.S. Mint officers brought the 10 Double Eagles into the courtroom. They had been hand carried by Mint police on a flight from Kentucky to Philadelphia and stored in a vault at the Philadelphia Mint overnight. The coins, spread out against a blue velvet background in a secured glass case, were placed in front of the jury. They walked slowly past the coins. Fifteen minutes later the Double Eagles were on their way back to Fort Knox.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Jacqueline Romero argued that documents from the Philadelphia Mint and the Secret Service investigation of the 1940s showed that no 1933 Double Eagles legally left the Mint. And, she said, every single coin that had been found could be traced to Israel Switt. She also discussed the government’s long pursuit of the coins: “Why do we care? We auctioned one off. You saw the certificate of monetization. We know how Fenton got his coin. He’s not Israel Switt. The coins and bills you have in your wallets carry the full faith and credit of the U.S. government. It means something. The government protects its money from thieves and swindlers. We have to care on principle. If we don’t, we are done. We are absolutely done.”

Berke countered that the Mint records are nearly 80 years old and ill-kept, and all the witnesses interviewed by the Secret Service are dead. He also said that in the confused first weeks after Roosevelt asked people to return their gold, it was still possible to exchange bullion for coin at the Philadelphia Mint. This “window of opportunity” in the spring of 1933, he argued, could well have been how Switt obtained the Double Eagles. “The government desperately wants these coins,” he said. “But the government can’t always get what it wants.”

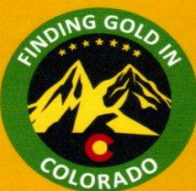
After eight days of testimony, the jury found otherwise. The Langbords are expected to appeal the verdict. Meanwhile, more 1933 Double Eagle gold coins may still be hidden away. “There has always been talk of others,” says Armen Vartian, the lawyer for the Professional Numismatists Guild. Hoge, the U.S. coin expert, says: “It’s not impossible that more are out there. I haven’t seen them. But it wouldn’t surprise me.” (THE END)



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**Coming Announcements and Special Events for Sept 2022**

**(WMMI - Western Museum of Mining & Industry, 225 North Gate Blvd. Colorado Springs, CO 80921**  
**(<https://www.wmmi.org/>) (Free to GPR Member with badge)**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5 <a href="#">LABOR Day</a>	6	7	8	9	10 <a href="#">Highland Ranch Panning Demo</a>
11	12	13	14	15	16	17 <a href="#">Beginners Panning/Sluicing Class</a>
18	19	20	21 <a href="#">GPR Club Meeting</a>	22	23 <a href="#">Autumnal Equinox</a>	24 <a href="#">GPR Outing Dig Blackhawk</a>
25	26	27	28	29	30	