



*Cheyenne Chapter  
GPAA*

P.O. Box 6504  
Cheyenne, WY 82003

www.cheyennegpaa.com



August 2005

MEETING MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by President Bob Morrison with 32 members and 2 visitors present.

Bob proposed the idea to expand our summer outing to Douglas Creek to include the months of June and August. The July meeting will still be held at Douglas Creek with the drawing and the potluck meal. The outings in June and August will consist of a potluck meal on one night and a campfire in the evenings. These two outings will just be a fun for the members. The monthly meetings for June and August will still be held in Cheyenne. The membership voted unanimously to hold the additional outings starting the summer.

Tom Massey will not be coming to Douglas Creek this year, he was only able to make it for one day if he did come. The State Director opted not to have him come because there is not enough GPAA members could be present on the one day.

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RAFFLE WINNERS

- Winner .....Prize
- Carl Filter.....Thermometer
- Dixie Bruce .....Knife sharpener
- Dennis Howell..... Binoculars
- Frank Williams .....1921 Silver dollar and Floating lantern
- Bill Rhoades..... Nugget
- Dale Fisher..... Nugget

- 50/50 Drawing
- Lyle Shingleton..... \$56.00

- Nametag
- Peggy Stumpf .....Colorado gold concentrates

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CLOSING GOLD PRICES—19 AUG

- Open Troy oz \$439.50
- Close \$437.50
- Down \$2.00

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- Chapter Meeting: Tuesday Sep 6, 7 PM Sandalwood's Restaurant, Holliday Inn.
- Chapter Meeting: Tuesday Oct 4, 7 PM Sandalwood's Restaurant, Holliday Inn.
- Chapter Meeting: Tuesday Nov 1, 7 PM Sandalwood's Restaurant, Holliday Inn.

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Remember when you renew your membership make sure you specify you are signing up through the Cheyenne Chapter so the club will earn more credits.

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WEBSITES OF INTEREST

- The BLM has a website where you can check on gold claims. Go to [www.blm.gov/Lr2000](http://www.blm.gov/Lr2000)
- The BLM website is back up.
- Wyoming Geological Survey [www.wsgs.uwyo.edu](http://www.wsgs.uwyo.edu)
- The Perth Mint of Australia [www.perthmint.com](http://www.perthmint.com)
- Click on 'Natural Gold Nuggets' then click on 'About Nuggets and Gold' for some interesting facts.
- Garmin GPS products go to [www.garmin.com](http://www.garmin.com)

Magellan GPS products go to [www.magellangps.com](http://www.magellangps.com)

My website [www.geocities.com/psomontes/](http://www.geocities.com/psomontes/)  
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The following is a news article on one of our members. My thanks to Kelly Milner and Faith Vroman for their assistance and to Cheyenne Newspapers, Inc. for allowing me to write this article.

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He's a real gold digger

Francis Oline is a prospector who has a nose for gold - even in his own backyard

By Kelly Milner

rep7@wyomingnews.com

CHEYENNE - The water slipped and sloshed around the black plastic pan as Francis Oline moved it around in a circle.

He dumped part of the water and dirt into a nearby bucket and repeated the process until the bottom of the pan was visible.

"There," he said and pointed.

At the bottom, surrounded by the fine gravel and twigs still left in the pan, were two shiny pinpricks. They were so small that few people would see them, but Oline knows well enough to see them.

"You know gold when you see it," he said.

Using a tool like an eye-dropper, Oline pulled the golden flour up from the pan and then into a separate vial.

There's probably more gravel than gold in there, he said, but no matter.

The shiny material that's 19 times heavier than the rocks around it made itself known by sticking to a wall of the vial, winking up at Oline.

"I've always said I'm going to shave these whiskers when I find the mother lode," Oline, 85, said, pulling on his white beard. "Well, I've still got them."

But Oline said his prospecting hobby is more than something to pass the time. It's what keeps him alive, he said. Oline was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 1992, though he has had the illness since 1984.

"You wouldn't wish this disease on your worst enemy," he said.

He uses oxygen and walks with canes or a walker, but he says it's his gold fever that keeps him moving as much as he does.

"If I stop moving, I'm done for," Oline said.

His friends see the value of his hobby too.

"Just get him on the end of a metal detector and three hours later, he's feeling good," friend and fellow prospector Earl Reynolds said. "He'll stop eating just to talk to you about it."

He may joke about striking it rich, but Oline appears to love the hunt every bit as much as the find. Finding a gold flake is a moment of joy for Oline.

"It isn't the amount that you find, it's just finding it," he said.

There are glimpses of gold and evidence of Oline's passion for his prospecting hobby throughout his house.

Oline has a handful of vials of gold flakes and dust from his treasure-hunting trips.

Attached to the television is Oline's schedule of shows, including those about gold. His hat is from the Gold Prospectors of America, of which Oline is a member. There are two magazines and pictures from gold prospecting trips Oline has taken to Arizona, Alaska and South Dakota.

But Oline's backyard is where his passion becomes most obvious.

While the metal detectors (Oline guesses he has about five right now) are kept inside, Oline's gold-panning operation has taken over his patio.

Oline brings dirt back from trips - places like Douglas Creek and South Pass City - and then pans through them as he has time and energy.

The buckets are everywhere, both with and without dirt.

Some just have water in them for panning purposes.

While Oline has equipment that will use water and air pressure to push dirt away and leave the gold, Oline said he has more luck with panning. And he has about a dozen or so battery-powered ones that swirl the dirt and water around for you.

One section of his fence is covered with rusted horseshoes and other ancient bits of metal that are trophies from metal detecting trips.

The shelf-like boards on the covered patio are cluttered with rocks. Some of them are just lovely to look at, but others sparkle.

Oline has stories of finding what others have missed - gold in rocks others passed over and "gobs and gobs" of a silver and lead mixture near an old homestead by Buford that group walked past.

While it's his passion now, Oline's gold-hunting hobby has not been a lifelong quest.

Oline grew up on a 970-acre farm and ranch near Carpenter. His father homesteaded the property in 1907.

Oline still owns 480 acres of farmland, but had to sell the homesteaded portion of the property. He plans to visit the homestead soon, at the permission of the new owner, to use the detecting equipment and find some wrenches he lost long ago on the farm.

Oline graduated from high school in 1939, when Carpenter still had a high school with a barn nearby for students who rode their horses to school.

He married his high school sweetheart, Dolores, in 1941, after she graduated from high school.

He was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1945, coming home from occupied Japan a little more than a year later. He and Dolores moved around before returning to Carpenter in Oline's family property in 1953.

"Dolores and I started looking for pretty rocks (on the farm)," he said, adding that they found arrowheads and scrapers.

Then Oline's friend Charles "Chub" Harper, who has since died, showed Oline his metal detector.

"I thought it sounded fun," Oline said.

He bought one, and he and Dolores traveled to parks all over Wyoming, Colorado and Nebraska with the new toy.

They found lost change and, once in a while, gold rings.

The couple moved to Cheyenne in 1996 for health reasons, and Dolores died in 1998.

Reynolds said he and Oline talk about lots of different things, but their conversation doesn't take long to switch to searching for treasures.

"Pretty soon his mind goes back to metal detecting," Reynolds said.

Oline is so enthusiastic about treasure hunting and prospecting that he has gotten others involved too.

Reynolds said, "The best metal detector I have, he bought me for my birthday."

The two have gone prospecting together, searching around old homesteads. Reynolds said he found an 1885 nickel at one.

But many days it's Oline on the back patio, swirling water around in a pan, his sharp eyes on the lookout for the hint of gold.

Oline said, "It gets in your blood."

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#### METAL DETECTING

At the August meeting Dave Fortney reported on his trip to Alaska.

According to Dave, this was a good year for gold in Alaska. He metal detected and found a 2 1/4 oz nugget.

Way to go Dave!

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#### AMANDA CLAIMS SOLD

The GPAA Amanda placer claims in Fremont County near South Pass City have been sold and are now closed as of the first of August. This includes Amanda 8, 18, 21, 24, 25 which are located on BLM land. Please stay off these claims.

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#### HISTORIC FACTOID

The largest gold nugget ever was the 2,284 ounce Welcome Stranger, found in Victoria, Australia, 1869.

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## GOLD PANNING CENTENNIAL RIDGE

By Pete Somontes

Aug. 13, 2005: I'm up at 5 am to get some coffee and breakfast before I leave. We have a 7 am departure from F.E. Warren AFB taking 16 Air Force members and their families to Centennial Ridge. This is their first time gold panning and we want to make it a memorable experience.

This outing was a suggestion I made to Terri Ammons our Outdoor Adventure Programmer and her family will be going along. We have two vans packed with the equipment: gold pans, shovels, waders, a tent, cook stove, firewood, and food. The weather is supposed to be cold and wet today so we told everyone to bring warm clothes.

I arrived at Outdoor Recreation at 6:20 am and double checked that we have everything. Terri arrived at 6:30 and we put our personal bags in the vans. By 7 am everyone is together for a safety briefing. We are going to a location just west of the town of Centennial, WY and up on Centennial Ridge. This is a valley with the Middle Fork of the Teton River running through it. There are 5 old gold mines in the vicinity, including the Cliff Mine and the Independence Mine. The Wyoming Geological Survey reports some placers where they have found gold. These are what we intend to work.

After an uneventful trip from Cheyenne we arrive at the Forrest Service Information Station on Rt. 130 above Centennial. This is the last rest stop until we reach the panning area. Advantage of it. We mount up and turn south on FSR. 338.

FSR. 338 turns westward as we continue deeper into the mountains. Finally we come to our turn-off, FSR. 307. I remind everyone on my van to check their seatbelts and then turn right on 307. This is a narrow road, as we start to climb the road gets rougher with large flooded potholes. As I try to avoid some of the larger holes I tell my passengers that this road is the original road carved out in 1875 to supply the mines. I try to get them to imagine what it must have been like to ride a wagon on this route (it's not too hard the way we are going). The road gets rougher, large boulders jut out of the roadway and there is a ravine on the right as the road leads down a steep hill. The drop off is about 70 feet and leads down to the Middle Fork of the Little Laramie River.

At the bottom the road turns left and then forks. Straight ahead the road continues uphill to the top of Centennial Ridge and to the Queen Platinum Mine overlooking Centennial. The right fork is marked 307A. We take the right fork.

This road is in even worse shape than the one we were just on. The road is very narrow, steep and extremely rough as we head down. There is no room to turn around until you get to the bottom of the hill.

At the bottom there is a road to the right that leads to the Independence Mine, I tell my passengers about the mine but I also tell them that we will not be going down that road because there is no room to turn around.

We continue on 307A and it begins to head uphill and then levels out. This is the panning area, ahead are the remains of some miners cabins and the ruins of a stamp mill. The Cliff Mine, I point out the collapsed mine entrance as we pass. We set up a day camp in a clearing on the right and ready the equipment.

I lead the group to the stream just below the cabins and show them how to set up the sluices. Then we start digging in a gravel bar.

We spend three hours processing the gravel and then I call them back and we start the cleanup. I show them how to clean a sluice and then everyone grabs a pan and I demonstrate for the gold. This is the part that they have been waiting for. I'm moving from one person to another as each asks if the glittering stuff in their pans is gold, but each time it is not. I have no gold in our pans but we have found mercury and many manmade parts of the cabins.

We all take some time to enjoy Terri's homemade elk chili and cornbread and then its time to go home. Everyone has had a good time, the weather was great and the area is beautiful. TRAVEL NOTE: If you go FSR. 307 is a well maintained dirt road, FSR 307A is not maintained, and a high clearance vehicle is required. Even with the 18" of clearance on some damage. Be prepared for anything. There are several very good campsites at the Cliff Mine. The river is very shallow, I didn't see any pools deep enough to operate a dam or beaver pond at the south end of the valley that may be worth looking into.

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## CLUB STORE

The club store is up and running. Ann Lang had a table full of all the club goodies at the August meeting. Make sure you check the store at the next meeting.

Coffee mugs \$ 5.00

Green pocket T-shirt \$16.00

Other color pocket T-shirts \$10.00

No pocket T-shirt \$ 9.00

GPAA mesh caps \$ 7.50

Chapter caps \$12.00

Green gold pan \$10.00

Black gold pan \$ 8.00

Classifier \$10.00

Scoop \$ 7.00

1/2 oz. vial \$ .35 ea. or 3/\$1.00

1 oz. vial \$ .40 ea. or 3/\$1.00

Suction tweezers \$ .40

Snuffer bottle \$ 3.00

## KITS

Black pan, sand, vial, snuffer \$15.00

Green pan, sand, vial, snuffer \$17.00

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Club members: If you have items for sale, contact Peggy Stumpf at 307-632-9945 or circlestar@Yahoo.com or Peter Somontes at psomontes@Yahoo.com to have your ad placed. Your ad will also be placed on the Chapter website.

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PROSPECTOR'S CACHE  
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Felix Paydirt Gourmet Gold. Club member John Eggleston is taking orders for the 2LB bag of Felix Paydirt. John orders a case of 10 bags at a time and receives one free bag which the club uses as a raffle item. The bags are \$45(\$40 + \$5 shipping).

If you would like to order a bag or two,

Contact John at 635-0229

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Quartz epidote crystals hand dug from the Fox Park area. Each crystal has been hand dug, polished and mounted in either a pair of earrings or as a necklace. Buy separately or earring/necklace set. Assorted styles available. \$10-15.

Call Louise Morrison 632-7895

Lmrr3964@aol.com

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For Sale: White's Metal Detector w/power pak and case.

Call Bob or Louise Morrison, 307-632-7895

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Center latch louvered tailgate. Fits late model Chevy or GMC, cost \$313, sell for \$150. Front mount receiver hitch. Fits most late model trucks & SUV's, half price, \$50.00

Call Francis Oline, 307-634-1133.

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2" Proline Floating Dredge, \$750.

Call Dallas Lake 307-649-2321

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For Sale: Keene 4" triple sluice, jet flare dredge, (model 4505PH). Like brand new, less than 20 hours use. Includes 6.5 hp Honda, \$2000 (Compare to new price of \$2875 fro Includes the extras of swivel nozzle (3" reduction, legal in Wyoming), 100' air hose, expansion air tank, regulator (\$470 value in the extras). Keene A52 sluice box, \$50 - usec price is \$99.95 on the internet. 4 gold pans (two GPAA type, one blue proline pan, one black pan) \$2.00 each. Mini cleanup sluice (Tom & Perry's) \$10.

5 gallon buckets - free -(come get them out of my shed). Some small misc stuff I'll give away - pump for recirculating mini sluice, mallet, some small digging tools, etc. Last LDMA Membership - sells for \$3500 at the gold shows - all that's needed is get it transferred to your name \$3000.

Call Mike Hayes (307) 640-4378



















