

# The *Soundoff*

**EUREKA!** Treasure Hunters Club,  
Inc.



V. 42, n. 2 June 2011

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## The Prez



Wow, June already! I hope you have been able to get out and do some hunting. I have been having trouble getting out, but hope to get out soon.

Well, the snow is not stopping in the high country so we might have to dress for colder temps for our Breckenridge outing. With a later snow melt there should be more targets waiting to be found.

The Blue and Gray hunt was a lot of fun and the rain stayed away, but it sure could have been a little warmer. I would like to thank all who helped out and to everyone who brought side dishes. Amazingly, we had no potato salad, I wonder why. For the ones that showed up, lots of good stuff was found. I hope you did not throw away any cannon ball parts or other little treasures.

We made some headway in organizing PERT and HART, and will be having training and sign up in the near future. Participation in PERT and HART will not be everyone's cup of tea. You will not be able to keep the items you detect. PERT participants might be called upon to give testimony in a trial, so I would encourage you to think hard about the requirements

# About *Soundoff*

*Soundoff* is the official newsletter of the Eureka! Treasure Hunters Club, Inc. (Eureka!). Mailing Address: PO Box 101385, Denver, CO 80250-1385.

Opinions expressed in *Soundoff* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the club or its members. Publication of information in *Soundoff* constitutes no guarantee of accuracy. Use of any information found in this publication is at the sole risk of the user. Neither Eureka!, nor its officers, nor *Soundoff*, nor its editors or contributors assume any liability for damages resulting from use of information in this publication.

## Submissions

Articles, letters and short items of interest on prospecting, detecting and treasure hunting topics are welcomed and encouraged. All items submitted for publication are subject to editing. Submittals for publication or correction of errors may be made by e-mail in ASCII text format or MS Word. All article submissions must be received by the editor no later than the deadline of the month (see calendar, p. 16) for inclusion in the next month's issue. Include publication information on articles clipped from other publications.

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## Advertising

Classified business-card-sized text advertising is free to members for non-business ads. Commercial display ads are available to anyone at the following charges: business card size, \$6.00 per month; 1/4 page, \$12.00 per month; 1/2 page, \$24.00 per month; full page, \$48.00 per month. Advertisers are encouraged to take out ads for 12 months and receive a 3-month discount. No other discounts apply. The treasurer must receive any required payments for commercial ads prior to their inclusion.

## About Eureka!

Eureka! is a Denver-based, Colorado nonprofit organization established in 1973 for the enjoyment of metal detecting, electronic prospecting and treasure hunting. Its purpose is to provide an educational and social forum of mutual benefit for members. Eureka! holds a monthly meeting and conducts various special presentations, hunts and seminars. Members have voting privileges. Membership includes a subscription to *Soundoff*, all general meetings and selected seminars. Annual dues are \$30 for single adult membership, \$36 for a family membership and \$15 for a Junior membership. Pro-rated dues may be paid by any member joining the club after the May 1 dues date. Club meetings are held on the second Friday of each month, 7:30 p.m., on the second floor of the Clement Community Center, 1580 Yarrow St., Lakewood, Colorado.

**Next Club Meeting**  
**2nd Friday, June**  
**7:30 p.m. at the Clement**  
**Community Center**  
**1580 Yarrow Street, Lakewood,**  
**Colorado**  
**Hotline: (303) 595-5448**  
**[www.eurekathc.com](http://www.eurekathc.com)**

and commitment involved before you sign up. I feel we will be able to offer the community a great service once we get everything running.

Did you make it to the Gilpin County Museum unveiling of the submarine? It's not too late to view the sub. You can still plan a day trip to check it out.

Happy Hunting

Ron

#### May Hunt Report

The North and South Hunt was a smashing success. With a record number of participants, a fine bbq and a mess of relics dating back as far as colonial times, how could we go wrong?

The inspiration for this hunt came from the trip that Ron, Linda and I took to D.I.V. The thrill of digging up a civil war relic is something that every metal detectorist should be able to feel. We started with the plans for the North and South hunt prior to our March trip to Virginia. We made some purchases of bullets, buttons and shrapnel for the hunt during that trip which started us down a very good path. Further purchases were made from relic dealers that we met during that trip as well. But the best were the donations made to us by fellow D.I.V.ers after Linda put an ad out saying that we would like to purchase some relics from those that attended. We were flabbergasted by the amount of quality relics that were donated for the hunt. Two individuals, who wish to remain anonymous, donated 75 bullets, numerous buttons, scabbard finials and other miscellaneous wonderful items. American Digger Magazine donated a book and a one year subscription. Thank you Butch and Anita for your donations.

The vendors of the relics that we purchased gave us some really good deals on relics and then threw in several items on top of our purchase. So a big thank you goes out to Fort

Donelson Relics and Grey Bird Relics for their cooperation and support. After being at Fort Donelson Relics for a few hours I can tell you that they have some amazing relics on display and for sale. If you are in Tennessee and happen to be in the area it is well worth a stop.

And now I take you back to your regularly scheduled hunt report. The day started off a bit cool and damp with a fair amount of rain the night before. Ron and I set the perimeter of the hunt field and then divided the field into quarters. We placed all of the relics that were to be planted into four piles on the table.

Scheduled to plant targets was Ron, Linda, Steve Montano and myself. We all picked a pile of relics and a quadrant and in short order all of the relics were planted. I must admit that I shed a tear as I placed some the relics in the ground as they were far too nice an item to be placed in the soil. Those who were smart brought their rubber knee boots for planting and then there was me. I brought along "waterproof" hiking boots which didn't hold the water out so well but did a nice job of holding water in. Ron, Linda and Steve Montano all had dry feet for the bbq and hunt. The grill was fired up at 11:00 with John Hinton and Jay Reed at the helm. Thanks for doing that again guys. The smell of hamburgers and hotdogs filled the air and got peoples appetite set into full swing. Louis was taking money and making sure that all were signing in. Ron was making sure that all the participants had run their coils over the test targets. Linda was keeping the food well organized as people were bringing it in. A fine array of morsels was organized about the tables.

After lunch and prior to the hunt the hunters gathered for a photo. Ron gave a quick talk about what we were about to partake in and went through our standard club hunt rules.

Continued on Page 13

## Secretary's Report

May 13, 2011

**President Ron Erickson** called the May meeting to order at 7:30.

There were approximately 62 members present and several guests: **Sue and Michael Johnson; Sue and Marty Cletus; Ted Swalles; Abe Espinoza;** and **Robert Braucht.**

Great snacks were brought by several members including **Sheri Muehlbauer, Delmar O'Dell, and Boots Lewis.** Thanks to everyone who brought food! If **you** can bring some yummys for the June meeting, members would definitely enjoy them!

### Old Business

Eureka! has donated \$250 to the Western History/Genealogy Department of the Denver Public Library. We appreciate the Department's research resources and its personnel.

Some of our very own members, **Ron Erickson and Jeff Lubbert,** were the guest speakers at the May meeting. They talked about their experience at Diggin' in Virginia (DIV--an organized invitational relic hunt dedicated to the recovery and preservation of Civil War artifacts). What a great slide show they and **Linda Erickson** put together!

Then, on Sunday, these three were the huntmasters for the May hunt. It was a cloudy day, but what a good hunt it was! They planted buttons, bullets, coins, cannon ball fragments and canister shot donated by fellow attendees of the DIV. Prizes included an *American Digger* subscription and a book about Civil War relics.

### New Business

**Terry Weatherly** is the huntmaster for the June hunt (June 11 and 12) in Breckenridge. He is still monitoring the snow melt in Breckenridge.

We look forward to getting new membership badges and

membership handbooks.

Eureka! is considering making donations to two groups: Operation Warm Heart of the Buckley First Sergeants and the Colorado National Guard Family Assistance Program. These programs provide support to personnel and their families.

### **Find of the Year**

Gold.....Roy Yerby  
Coin.....John Hinton  
Jewelry.....John Steele  
Token.....John Steele  
Artifact.....Burt Downie

### **Chelsea's Treasure Bone Clue Hunt**

Bill Chapman asked the membership who found Chelsea's bone. No one had found it! It is still out there, so, go get it for this month's meeting! No one found the Chelsea Treasure Bone. The reward for the June hunt will be doubled

### **General Drawing**

Gold Nugget Drawing (1.3g)  
Terry Weatherly

Christmas Drawing(1901 Morgan) John Steele  
Membership Drawing  
Steve Montaño

### General Drawing

1911S Barber Quarter  
Jim Parriott  
2007 Proof Set  
Walter Hoessle  
1912D V Nickel  
Melanie Reinhart  
1937 Buffalo Nickel  
Jay Reed  
1881 3 Cent  
Louise Smyth  
1847 1 Cent  
Jeff Lubbert  
1855 Sitting Liberty ½ Dollar  
Bill Chapman  
1941 Walking Liberty ½ Dollar  
Alan Bravo  
1945 2.5 Pesos  
Jim Griffin  
1877 8 Reales  
Jeff Lubbert

### Last Chance Drawings

2011 United States Coin Book  
Sheri Muehlbauer

Minelab Emergency Kit

# Winners of the Month

## GOLD CATEGORY --- Winford Faires

*b*



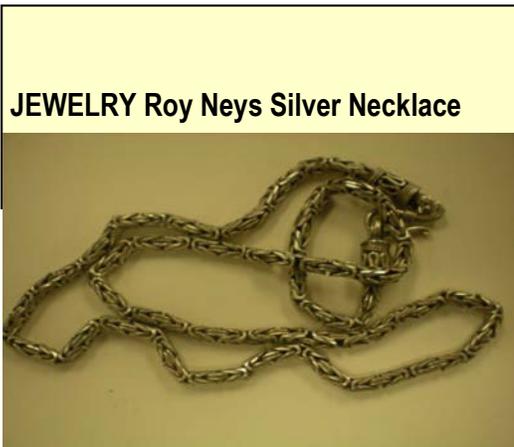
Winford takes first prize with a 18 K Gold Necklace With Gold Catholic Pendant!

Winford is working his MXT With the Eclipse Coil, starting to do a Tot Lot when, BINGO! Nice Job, Winford! Keep it up!

## COIN CATEGORY - Jon Steele

### 1906 D Barber Half

Mr. John Steele, Wow! Good Job, John! Taken with his White's Vision V-3 with 10 " Coil from a Denver Downtown Lot. This guy is Good! He was our Metal Detector Of the year Winner For 2010. Go get 'em John.



## JEWELRY Roy Neys Silver Necklace

### Hand-Tooled Silver Necklace

Roy Got This Jewel at an undisclosed location That he wants to keep secret. At the current price of silver and for the artistic way it was created, definitely a great find!

## ARTIFACT - Jim Griffin

Jim Griffin nailed this one with his White's DFX in a trashy area south of Limon. He was using the small coil. Good job for a trashy area, Jim, especially when a lot of trash would give you the same signal!



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**GOLD CATEGORY**

Win Faires .....24" 18 carat Gold Chain w Medallion  
Phillip Byrd.....14 Carat Gold Ring  
Roy Neys .....White Gold Ring  
Laura Lewis .....White Gold Ring

**JEWELRY CATEGORY**

Roy Neys..... Silver Necklace  
Phillip Byrd.....Silver Necklace  
Cindy Bockenstadt.....Silver Ring

**COIN CATEGORY**

John Steele ..... 1906 D Half  
Jay Reed.....1937 D Dime  
Alan Bravo .....1898 1C  
Cindy Bockenstedt.....1936 D Quarter.

**ARTIFACT CATEGORY**

Jim Grippen .....Police Badge.....  
Cindy Bockenstedt .....Suspender Holder

**FIND-OF-THE-MONTH CATEGORIES**

**Gold:** Natural gold (flakes, nuggets, wire) stamped karat alloy content or obvious custom alloy item

**Jewelry:** objects of metal often set with gems and worn for personal adornment, except jewelry qualifying for the GOLD category.

**Coin:** a piece of metal issued by governmental authority as money (includes GOLD coins of any nation).

**Token:** a piece resembling a coin issued as money by some person or body not of a governmental authority; can be redeemed for services or specified items.

# Chelsea's Treasure Bone Clue Hunt #47 - Park/Beach Activities

Find the words in the grid. When you are done, the unused letters in the grid will spell out a hidden message. Pick them out from left to right, top line to bottom line. Words can go horizontally, vertically and diagonally in all eight directions.

I G W A S A T S G L O A G N P L  
J A N K E S I N T T I N N I G N  
E O A I R A I B M E I T C A S L  
P I G C D T N I A N C N T A A B  
L H E G C A L A N S I B N E L S  
E I D E I I E U R C E D O N M O  
O D T K S N S R K L C B U N F F  
T E A C O I G I N A F O A R R T  
D A G A C E N T S T O T I L H B  
E N E S C G A T S E T S O F L A  
A D C Y E O L N S M B T R U C L  
T S I E R E O N S E I T E W H L  
E E N K I L O S E T M Y B O N E  
N E K C V O L L E Y B A L L T P  
Q K J A F Z B K T A N N I N G J  
W K R H F M V L L A B T O O F N

[www.WordSearchMaker.com](http://www.WordSearchMaker.com)

|             |            |
|-------------|------------|
| BASEBALL    | PICNICKING |
| DETECTING   | READING    |
| FOOTBALL    | SANDCASTLE |
| FRISBEE     | SOCCER     |
| HACKEYSACK  | SOFTBALL   |
| HIDEANDSEEK | SUNNING    |
| JOGGING     | TANNING    |
| METAL       | VOLLEYBALL |



## Eureka!'s June Birthdays

- Rose Abercrombie
- Judy Applehans
- Gene Bockenstedt
- Doug Brott
- Rick Freund
- Ada Keim
- Mark Michelley
- Riley Montano
- Berniece Ortiz
- Michael Sensano
- Thomas Zawitzki
- 



### **TREASURE HUNTER'S CODE OF ETHICS**

- I WILL respect private property and do no treasure hunting without the owner's permission.
- I WILL fill all excavations.
- I WILL appreciate and protect our heritage of natural resources, wildlife, and private property.
- I WILL use thoughtfulness, consideration, and courtesy at all times.
- I WILL build fires in designated or safe places only.
- I WILL leave gates as found.
- I WILL remove and properly dispose of any trash that I find.
- I WILL NOT litter.
- I WILL NOT destroy property, buildings, or what is left of ghost towns and deserted structures.
- I WILL NOT tamper with signs, structural facilities, or equipment.



# June 2011

**Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat**

|            |    |    |                    |    |                       |    |
|------------|----|----|--------------------|----|-----------------------|----|
|            |    |    | 1                  | 2  | 3                     | 4  |
| 5          | 6  | 7  | 8<br>Board Meeting | 9  | 10<br>Monthly Meeting | 11 |
| 12<br>Hunt | 13 | 14 | 15                 | 16 | 17                    | 18 |
| 19         | 20 | 21 | 22                 | 23 | 24                    | 25 |
| 26         | 27 | 28 | 29                 | 30 |                       |    |



# July 2011

**Mon   Tue   Wed   Thu   Fri   Sat**

|            |    |    |                    |    |                      |    |
|------------|----|----|--------------------|----|----------------------|----|
|            |    |    |                    |    | 1                    | 2  |
| 3          | 4  | 5  | 6<br>Board Meeting | 7  | 8<br>Monthly Meeting | 09 |
| 10<br>Hunt | 11 | 12 | 13                 | 14 | 15                   | 16 |
| 17         | 18 | 19 | 20                 | 21 | 22                   | 23 |
| 24         | 25 | 26 | 27                 | 28 | 29                   | 30 |

# Finds of the Year Awards 2010



The **Gold** certificate for find of the year was awarded to **Roy Yerby** for finding a 14 K White Gold Diamond Ring. Roy was not present to receive his award.



The **Coin** find of the Year was awarded to **John Hinton** for finding a 1852 Gold Dollar



The **Jewelry** certificate for find of the year was awarded to John Steele for finding two sterling rings.



The **Token** certificate for find of the year was awarded to John Steele for finding a Five Cent Leadville Token

# Eureka! Treasure Hunters

## Service Awards

It was to be a shotgun start and the participants were to yell out “BANG” when they found a bullet and “BOOM” when they found a piece of shrapnel. We would hunt for one hour and  
CONTINUATION OF JEFF LUBERTS REPORT FROM Page 3

then take an inventory of what had been found and let all know what was still in the ground. The hunt began at 1:00 and soon you could hear “BANG”, “BANG”, “BOOM” coming from all portions of the hunt field. I was stopped several times during the first hour and asked what something was. I was happy to stop and talk to fellow members and let them know what it was they were holding and then watch a smile come over their face. I must admit that there was a bit of jealousy on my part and yet happiness for the finder for a few of the items. Far too soon the first hour was up and we headed back to the picnic area for the

inventory. Somehow our crew had missed finding several bullets, buttons and coins. I for one had a bad first hour with only five bullets, three buttons and a couple of natural finds to my credit. During this break several complimentary comments were made about the hunt. Since so few of us from this part of the country get the chance to hunt for Civil War artifacts, this hunt really excited those that attended.

We headed back out to the hunt field and soon people were finding good stuff once again. Several more bullets, coins and a .  
Continued on P. 14



The 2010 Dan Sprouse Memorial Award as chosen by the current and previous president going to the club member who helped the President the most was presented to **Jane Reed**



The 2010 Gene Kotlan Memorial Award as chosen by the general membership who has contributed the most for the good of the club was presented to **Bill Chapman**.

# Our May Civil War Relics hunt at Inspiration Point Park



The Hunt Scene was reminiscent of southern pine-forested battlefields. A period American Flag was posted half-mast from a pine tree which would only happen if the Flag Bearer was dead or dying, and I got an eerie feeling from the scene, knowing that the finds were from an actual battlefield. The shell fragments and munitions planted killed Combatants from both sides, .Probably someone who did not want to die!(ed. Comment: I found a clasp from a rucksack, which I kept., because I knew it didn't kill anyone...)

CONTINUATION OF JEFF LUBERTS REPORT from P. 13

and a couple pieces of shrapnel were found. Soon though only a couple hardcore detectorists were left along with me. I cleaned up the remainder of our picnic area and said my goodbyes to Cindy and Terry (they really are hardcore).

I have to believe that this was one of our better hunts in a while. With an entry fee of only \$5 this was a BARGAIN hunt as finding one or two items paid for your hunt fee. (ed. Note ANOTHER GREAT HUNT PROVIDED BY THE BEST IN THE BUSINESS..THANKS, Y'ALL!)

## Vice Presidents Report—Steve Montano

You couldn't ask for better weather we've had just enough rain to make the ground soft for making it easier to pop out those treasures. Can't wait to see your finds at the finds table. Just remember, if metal detecting or prospecting know the rules and regulations of the area and "No Digging" just use a probe to find your targets.

Last months club hunt which was put on by Ron & Linda Erickson and Jeff Lubert was a successful hunt with good food, fun was had by all. There sure was a lot of very interesting targets like civil war bullets and other artifacts. So, if you haven't been to any of the monthly clubs hunt try to get out to our next months hunt, they are always fun and it's a great way to mingle with other club members.

## QUEST SPEAKER FOR JUNE 10th MEETING at 7:30pm

Our guest speaker is Rod Haenni, owner of Arapahoe Coin and Stamp. His speech will tell you how to get the best prices for your gold and silver with an emphasis on how not to get ripped-off when you sell.

# In-Town Hunt Schedule

If this sounds familiar, the rules regarding in-town hunts bear repeating. Again, I want to reiterate in-town hunt rules for those who seem to have missed the obvious by failing to read and follow the instructions the club has provided. We want you to put on hunts. They are designed to be fun, first and foremost. They provide a context outside of the meetings for fellowship with club members. To put on an in-town hunt you **MUST**:

- **Schedule with the Huntmaster.**
- **Provide a plan.**
- **Provide flyers.**
- **Ensure the hunt rules are discussed BEFORE the hunt.**
- **Police the hunt.**
- **The hunt master for any particular hunt can decide open hunt .**
- **(non-members may hunt) or members only**
- **Write a story for the newsletter and send it and accompanying photos to the newsletter editor prior to that month's deadline.**

To ensure the continuation of this hobby and to provide the best impression of Eureka! and its member-

ship, you, as hunt master, **MUST** enforce all rules, including:

1. **Pouches to store finds and trash MUST be worn and used at all times during the hunt.**
2. **All hunters must wear headphones.**
3. **Absolutely no tolerance of holes left open. A first warning, followed by a time-out or expulsion from the hunt, will usually get people's attention**
4. **Hunters digging and leaving trash on the hunt field should receive the same treatment discussed above.**

September will be our Coihuna competition which will be put on by a board member this year (TBD).

Remember, the calendar that we put up during the meetings shows what we have scheduled. Just putting your name on the calendar does not mean that you automatically get that month. All hunts will need to be okayed by Huntmaster prior to officially being put in the newsletter and put on.

Failure to follow the guidelines may result in hunts being cancelled.

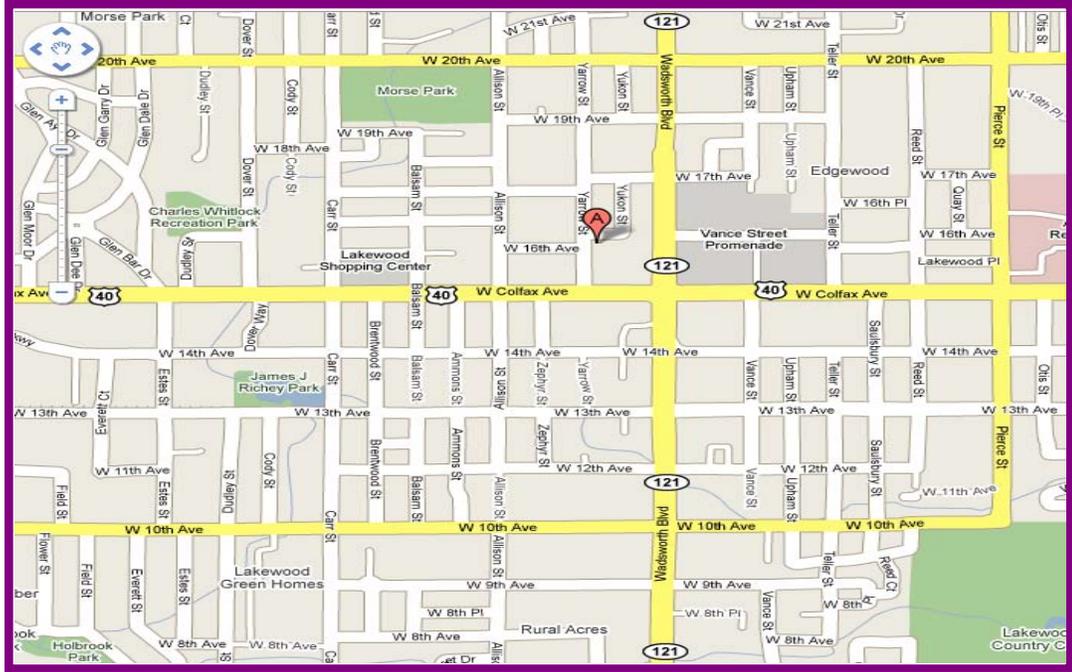
Use this space for FREE as an Eureka! Member—advertise your unwanted equipment or use it to find a hunting partner.

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Eureka! Club meetings are held on the second Friday of each month, 7:30 p.m., on the second floor of the Clement Community Center, 1580 Yarrow St., Lakewood, Colorado.



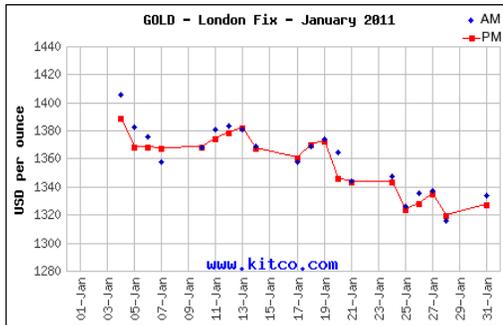
## Advertising

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Business card size, \$6.00 per month  
 1/4 page, \$12.00 per month  
 1/2 page, \$24.00 per month  
 full page, \$48.00 per month

Advertisers are encouraged to take out ads for 12 months and receive a 3-month discount. No other discounts apply. The treasurer must receive any required payments for commercial ads prior to their

## Gold Prices



## Silver Prices



### GOLD-N-DETECTORS

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**802 Washington Ave.**  
Golden, CO 80401

E-mail: [Bill@goldendetectors.com](mailto:Bill@goldendetectors.com)

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- Rock Tumblers
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- Rock Picks
- Accessories

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 PROFESSIONAL NUMISMATIST

843 WADSWORTH BLVD.  
303-232-0763

LAKEWOOD, CO, USA 80214  
FAX 303-232-0867

## Contact List

| <b>Officers</b>  | <b>Name</b>                | <b>Home Phone</b> | <b>E-Mail</b>                  |
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| Vice President   | Steve Montaño              | (303) 460-8206    | actionstriping@aol.com         |
| Secretary  | Louise Smyth               | (303) 477-4295    | louiseasmyth@msn.com           |
| Treasurer  | John Steele                | (720) 530-6169    | johnsteele400@hotmail.com      |
| Board 2012   | Mary Sable                 | (303) 985-4385    | rmrsable@aol.com               |
| Board 2013   | Terry Weatherly            | (303) 423-2228    | tweatherly07@comcast.net       |
| Board 2012   | Roy Neys                   | (303) 936-6218    | coilsearch@msn.com             |
| Board 2013   | Bernie Watts               | (303) 526-5383    | bernie@backshopenterprises.com |
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| <b>Volunteers</b>  |                            |                   |                                |
| PERT   | Joe Carter                 | Nametags          | Annette Krelle                 |
| HART   |                            | Coin Purchases    |                                |
| Hunts Coordinator  | John Steele & Mel Edington | Greeters          | Rose Abercrombie               |
| Finds Table  |                            | Orientation       |                                |
| Finds Table  | Bob Flier                  | Speakers          | Steve Montano                  |
| Drawing Table  |                            | Trophy Gal        | Louise Smyth                   |
| <b>For general information contact the hotline: (303) 595-5448</b>                                     |                            |                   |                                |
| <b>Visit our club on the Internet: <a href="http://www.eurekathc.com">http://www.eurekathc.com</a></b> |                            |                   |                                |



The **Artifact** find of the year was awarded to Burt Downie for finding a Silver Wallet

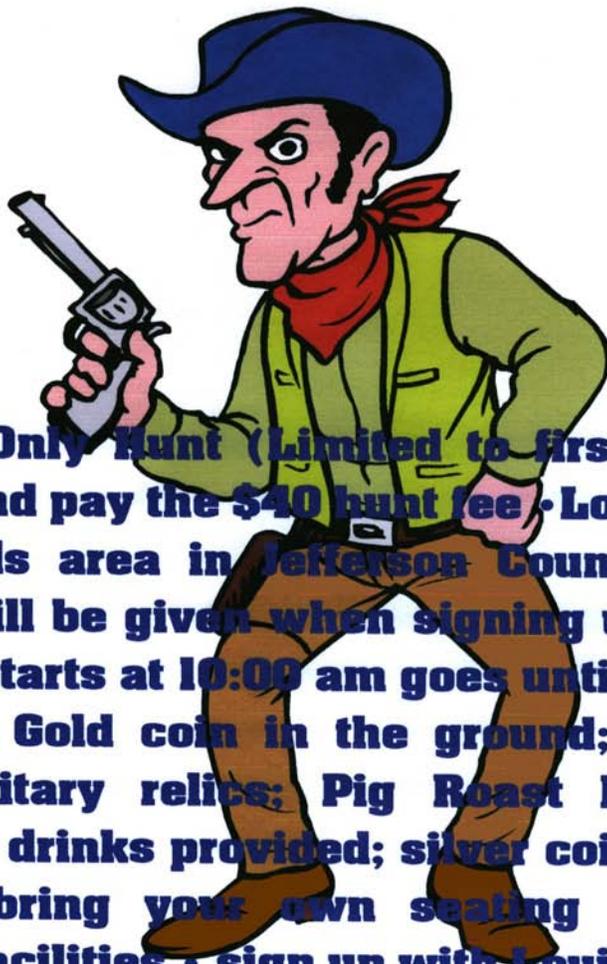
## Huntmaster Report

By Terry Weatherly

The June Hunt-Scheduled for Breckenridge ski area may require scuba gear as the snow is not receding as planned. Vail and Aspen are opening their slopes to Tubers and Kiddies. Bring Your Tubes! Stay tubed for more info at the June Meeting..

# **SON OF A GUN II**

## **July's In-Town Hunt**



**Members Only Hunt (Limited to first 50 who sign up) and pay the \$40 hunt fee • Location - A cross roads area in Jefferson County (exact location will be given when signing up) • July 10, 2011 - Starts at 10:00 am goes until 6:00 pm • Includes: Gold coin in the ground; Railroad relics; Military relics; Pig Roast Bar-B-Que lunch with drinks provided; silver coins galore • please bring your own seating • on-site restroom facilities • sign up with Louise Smyth**

## Pirate Ship Finds Exhibit

*Club Event-Let's all go!*

YO HO HO AND A LOAD OF BOOTY pirates' haul illuminates history

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Barry Clifford remembers the yarns his Uncle Bill used to spin at a New England fish shack during his childhood, detailing the swashbuckling adventures and tragic loss of the **Whydah** - one of the world's most famous pirate ships, which sank spectacularly off the coast of Massachusetts in 1717.

"Every Cape Cod family had their own treasured version of it," said Clifford. "But was it folk story or was it real? And who was going to find it?"

As it turns out, Clifford did.

Now one of the world's most renowned underwater archaeological explorers, he discovered the **Whydah** in 1984 after years of painstaking research, technological innovation, and trial and error.

The fruits of that discovery are on display in the Denver Museum of Nature & Science's "Real Pirates: The Untold Story of the **Whydah** From Slave Ship to Pirate Ship."

The National Geographic-backed exhibit, which runs today through Aug. 21, offers a unique glimpse into a lifestyle and culture that continues to fascinate - and terrify - into the 21st century.

"Real Pirates" is more than an embalmed chunk of history or a gritty curiosity. The **Whydah** find is unprecedented in its richness, continuing to yield tens of thousands of priceless, often one

of-a-kind artifacts (gold and silver coins, weapons, surgical instruments, clothing) nearly three decades after its initial discovery - and nearly three centuries after it sank into the Atlantic off Cape Cod. of-a-kind artifacts (gold and silver coins, weapons, surgical instruments, clothing) nearly three decades after its initial discovery - and nearly three centuries after it sank into the Atlantic off Cape Cod. discovered in U.S. waters and, according to Clifford, the only real pirate treasure on display anywhere in the world.

"All of the shipwrecks you've heard about in the Caribbean are Spanish galleons," Clifford said. "They're like big Brinks trucks, going back to Europe with freshly minted coins that were being robbed from the indigenous peoples of the Americas."

The **Whydah**, however, was a former slave ship captured by pirates in 1716 and pressed into service as a plundering vehicle. Her crew collected the riches of 50 other ships in a matter of months.

The "Real Pirates" exhibit focuses on 200 of these artifacts in an evocative multimedia tour that, at times, allows visitors to go "below deck" on the **Whydah** in a life-size replica of part of the ship. Kids can also touch real pirate treasure, tie pirate knots, hoist the skull-and-crossbones flag and generally follow a cast of real-life characters through the triumph and tragedy of life at sea.

While the displays are impressive - witness the "coin room," with over 4,000 of the shiny little discs overflowing from treasure chests - the significance of the find goes beyond monetary value. The history of the **Whydah** and the aftermath of its crash are, in many ways, exemplary of the "golden age" of piracy in the 18th century, as well as the crude stirrings of

democracy.

It doesn't whitewash the harsh realities of the time - which would be inexcusable, given the bloody resurgence of real piracy in recent years.

Instead, "Real Pirates" smartly balances the kid-friendly characters that inhabit Disney's "Pirates of the Caribbean" films with an honest, historically accurate appraisal of where piracy came from - and what it meant.

So what does that mean?

"Well, there's some irony there. You've got a ship that started out as a slave ship, and now you've got a group of guys that are experimenting in democracy. Make no mistake, they're crooks and outlaws, but many of them were former slaves. In the pirate brotherhood, you were elected by your peers based on what you contributed to the ship and how good you were

"As a slave ship, the **Whydah** had a license to buy and sell people," Clifford said as he toured the exhibit in Denver on Tuesday. "It was captured by pirates, a third of whom were of African origin, and most of whom So what does that mean?

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The tale began after the slave ship **Whydah** - named for the largest slave port in West Africa - dropped its load of human captives in the Caribbean and headed back to sea.

In February 1717, just off the Bahamas, it was captured by the English pirate Samuel Bellamy and his crew.

In two months, they took over another 50 ships, collecting a vast wealth of plunder. But the three-masted ship sank in a violent storm off Cape Cod that April, and most of the 146-member crew drowned.

The shipwreck wasn't discovered until 1984, when underseas explorer Barry Clifford, using a map from 1717, found the remains and started a recovery operation that continues today.

He brought up troves of gold and silver coins, everyday items such as pewter plates, even the ship's bell, which was used to authenticate the only pirate shipwreck discovered in U.S. waters.

But in 2006, controversy hit when the Museum of Science and Industry in Tampa, Fla., wanted to exhibit some of the artifacts in a show designed to coincide with the Hollywood release of "Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End."

Critics charged that the ship's slave history was being downplayed in favor of the pop-culture pirate trend, and the idea was dropped.

So when National Geographic and Arts and Exhibitions International teamed up to design a show using the same pirate artifacts, they formed an advisory panel of academics and historians to ensure accuracy and balance in developing the content.

"Real Pirates" is a multimedia journey that cuts back and forth between the two worlds: the slave trade of West Africa that created such abundant prosperity in the Caribbean, and the drama of the **Whydah**, from its capture by pirates to the raging storm that sank the ship.

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It's ultimately, that controversy would yield the compelling narrative of a blockbuster exhibition called "Real Pirates: The Untold Story of the **Whydah** from Slave Ship to Pirate Ship."

The show, which opens March 4 at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, probes the link between slavery and piracy, lucrative businesses that operated in the thriving economic hub of the Caribbean during the early 18th century.

"It's extraordinarily important that we tell the whole story," said Mark Lach, senior vice president of Arts and Exhibitions International and designer of the show. Along with weapons, treasure and a full-scale reproduction of the **Whydah**'s stern - complete with the pirate's cabin - there are artifacts of slavery, including shackles and an iron bar used as "trade iron" in exchange for captive humans.

"Real Pirates" focuses on four of the **Whydah** pirates, including one who was Dutch African.

"Pirates were the bad guys and the bad girls," Lach said. "But they were also people looking for freedom in a world where it wasn't allowed for many, especially Africans."

The pirate ship, he said, "was a floating democracy, where everyone had a vote." So what does that mean?

"Well, there's some irony there. You've got a ship that started out as a slave ship, and now you've got a group of guys that are experimenting in democracy. Make no mistake, they're crooks and outlaws, but many of them were former slaves. In the pirate brotherhood, you were elected by your peers based on what you contributed to the ship and how good you were ships, and even captains, were blacks who were being elected by predominantly European crews. This was a page in history that hadn't been opened until we had really done our research and discovery."

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