



The Prospector

Portland Gold Prospectors, Inc.

GPAA Portland, Oregon Chapter



January, 2018



EVERYTHING GOLD

PORTLAND GOLD PROSPECTORS Inc.

Presents

ANNUAL POTLUCK BANQUET

January 21, 2018 at 1:30 pm

Milwaukie Grange Hall

There will be a short meeting and then ...the celebration begins.

All Members, Guests and Families are Welcome.

Please bring potluck food to share: One dish per family – **label foods that contain nuts or strawberries.**

The Chapter will provide ham, turkey, rolls, potatoes and gravy, scalloped potatoes, coffee, Crystal Light and bottled water.

We recommend you follow the list below based on your last name.

- A-D: Appetizers (Ideas: Chips, Cheese, dips, etc.)
- E-J: Side dishes (Ideas: Vegetables, stuffing, mini sausages.)
- K-Q: Desserts: (Ideas: If it's sweet, it's dessert!)
- R-Z Salad (Ideas: Green, Pasta, Fruit, etc.)

Please label pots and serving spoons for easy identification and return.

You do not need to bring your own table setting; the Chapter provides, plates, silverware, cups and napkins.

There will be door prizes.

Special Raffle: Enter to win some gold by making a donation of canned food. ONE entry per adult only. Bring two or more canned/boxed food items. If you forget to bring food items, a \$5.00 donation to the food bank will be allowed. (1 ticket per adult, 18 & over)

Volunteers are needed to help set up and clean up. If interested please contact Bill Bench (503-708-4997)

Plan to attend for great food & great fellowship

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gmlewis238@msn.com

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swbench@comcast.net

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bevpark@comcast.net

Claims

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jerryjohns@gmail.com

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fostercr@rconnects.com

Robert Burns 503-680-8885
rdburns77@hotmail.com

Vern Freitas 209-535-5683
vernonjfreitas@gmail.com

Jim Schmidt
jschmidt118@q.com

**Board Members at Large
2018-2019:**

Richard Ruth 503-663-9087
richard.ruth5@comcast.net

Elaine Ruth 503-663-9087
richard.ruth5@comcast.net

Ken Burns 503-631-3071
Kenhellenburns@gmail.com

Ken Burns 503-631-3071
Kenhellenburns@gmail.com

**Honorary Board Member
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richard.ruth5@comcast.net

Newsletter

Tim Snyder 503-481-1133
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aaron@ajcreative.net

Chapter Minutes – December 2017

Start time: 1:30pm

Members in attendance: 36

The president led the group in *The Pledge of Allegiance*

Visitors: 1

The minutes were from the Previous meeting was posted in the newsletter. A motion was made to approve the minutes as written and 2nd. The motion was approved

Treasurer's Report: A motion was made to approve them as read. It was seconded and approved.

The treasurer requested permission from chapter members to pay the annual insurance on the grange hall. A motion was made and seconded and the vote was unanimous to allow the treasurer to pay the 2018 insurance.

Correspondences: None

Membership: There are three levels of membership for the chapter.

Level 1: is to be a chapter member. To do this you must attend at least 3 meetings, outings or functions in a given year. At least one of these must be a business meeting. There is no additional cost beyond the 3 attendances to be a member.

Level 2: GPAA – We are a chapter of the GPAA and as such, all officers must be members of the GPAA. All chapter members are encouraged to join the GPAA, but that is not a requirement.

Level 3: LDMA – The LDMA is an Elite level within the GPAA and allows special access and discounts to functions and mining claims.

GPAA State Director: Steve shared that the Washington State Gold and Fish pamphlet has a 1 page addendum added in 2017. Make

sure you have the addendum with you if you go out.

Newsletter: Please feel free to share with Tim Snyder any news articles or other items you want added to the newsletter.

To get the newsletter mailed to you, please add your e-mail to our sign in roster. If you are still not getting it, please verify the address on the roster is accurate. We can also mail it via US Postal service to members for \$15 a year. That price covers the cost of postage.

Library: Joe Weber shared that we will not have a Library in January due to the Potluck. We are still looking for a librarian. If interested, please let an officer know.

Potluck: Spent about 10 minutes talking about the upcoming Potluck. The details will be posted on the front page of the newsletter.

If you have any photos to share, we will have a slide show. Please send pictures to Richard Ruth.

Gold and Treasure Show: We have tickets to sell already. J Admission is \$10 at the door, but \$5 if you buy tickets in advance. The chapter gets \$2.50 of each ticket.

You can get tickets from Jerry Johns (Current President). If you wish to sell them, you can check the tickets out and bring the money back for any tickets you sell later.

Next Gold show planning session is Jan 6th at the Minihaha grange. All members are welcome to attend the planning sessions.

Audit of the books: Larry Sharp will be leading the Audit of the financial books. Larry sought out and received two volunteers to help him with the audit. The audit should take place soon.

Raffle started at 3:15pm and meeting closed at 3:30pm.

Quest For “Blue Bucket Mine” Led “Suckers” To Actual Riches

As a historical account, the Lost Blue Bucket Mine story is, to put it mildly, questionable. But there can be no denying the impact it has had as a legend, repeated and believed by generations of Oregonians.

By Finn J.D. John
January 22, 2017

Oregon, like other states, has an official state bird (Western Meadowlark), animal (beaver), tree (Douglas Fir), gemstone (Sunstone) and so forth — down to the ubiquitous state beverage (milk, just like nearly every other state with a dairy industry).

But if the state were going to designate an official state legend, it could do a lot worse than to designate the story of the Lost Blue Bucket Mine.

The Lost Blue Bucket Mine is a story from the early days of the Oregon trail. It's probably completely untrue — but then again, maybe it's not... and its very existence as a myth changed Oregon history in several important ways.

The legend's backstory: Back in 1845, a big party of emigrants was moving west along the Oregon Trail when members started hearing rumors about Native Americans planning to attack in the Blue Mountains. While they were wondering what to do about this, mountain man Stephen Meek told them he could lead them on a “cut-off route” over land, around the Blue Mountains to safety. Some 200 wagons' worth of people took him up on it, and they branched off from the Oregon Trail at Vale and headed out into the Oregon high desert.



Stephen Meek, the mountain man who led the party that supposedly found the Blue Bucket Mine. (Image: Oregon Historical Society)

The venture was a disaster. The going was very difficult, and it soon became clear that Meek, although he'd been through Eastern Oregon a time or two, hadn't taken very good notes. When he arrived at the alkali lake country, the changes in drought conditions had rendered the whole landscape unfamiliar to him.

Conditions went from stressed to desperate. And then people started dying.

Finally the party split up, with one group going north and the other continuing west. Eventually both parties found the Deschutes River and followed it north to the Columbia, where they rejoined the regular trail. Both parties, by this time, were exhausted, out of supplies (or nearly so) and noticeably depleted in numbers. At least 23 of them died, probably more, and many more arrived in The Dalles in such weakened condition that they didn't survive the subsequent winter.

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Presidents Blog January 2018

Happy New Year everyone. With rotation of officers at our January meeting, this will be my last blog in the newsletter. Going forward, our new President Mike Lewis will take over this spot going forward. As one of my last duties, I would like to invite everyone to bring a friend to the January meeting. This will be our Annual Potluck and we invite everyone to join us. I wish everyone a great 2018 and great health

Happy Prospecting,
Jerry Johns

Outgoing President
Portland Gold Prospectors Inc.

Come join us at our next meeting.

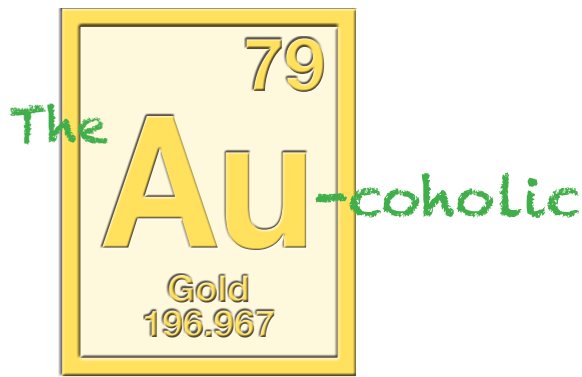
January 21st at 1:30pm.
Milwaukie Grange hall
12015 SE 22nd, Milwaukie, OR

OUR NEXT MEETING WILL BE THE ANNUAL POTLUCK. BRING A DISH AND A FRIEND AND WE'LL SEE YOU THERE.

The Portland Gold Prospectors meetings are the third Sunday of every month beginning at 1:30pm. All interested parties are invited to attend the monthly meetings. Become a member of the Portland Gold prospectors, Inc a chapter of the Gold Prospectors Association of America.

For info contact Mike Lewis, gmlewis238@msn.com or visit www.portlandgoldprospectors.org.

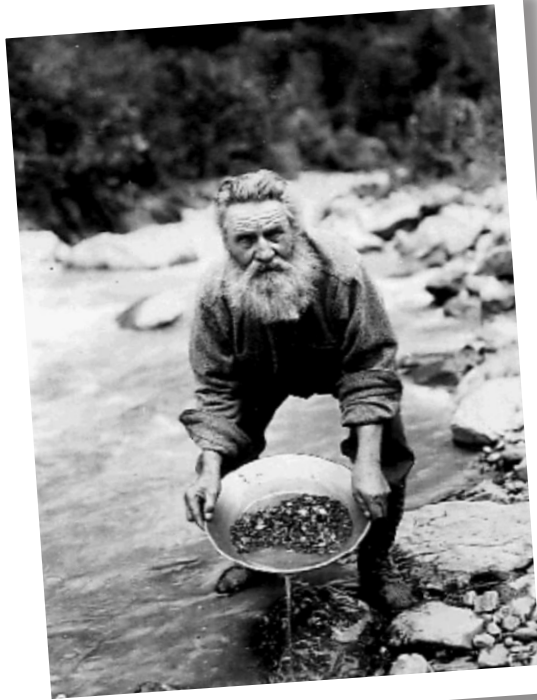




In recovery we call them Sponsors, Mentors and Accountability Partners.

Out on the creek, we call them grizzled ol' sourdoughs.

They're the people who've helped us get started "moiling" for gold.



It's great that in this club we're able to share our hard-won lore with newcomers. And creek veterans as well.

So thanks to Jerry for his years of service as club president, and to Dave for keeping us up-to-date on the claims.

And thanks to Michael, Steve, Bev and Yolanda for taking the reins for this coming year.



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By that time Meek himself was nowhere to be found. Meek, after hearing a credible report that a grieving father who had lost two children to the hardships of the trail was now coming after him with murder in mind, slipped away from the wagon train in the dark of night.

But along the trail, just after the party split into two groups, members of one of the two groups apparently found the Blue Bucket Mine.

The Legend: According to the legend, shortly after the party split, one of the groups was camping for the night near the edge of a river or big creek — possibly the John Day River.

A group of the children from the party went down to the river, probably to fetch water; and when they came back up, they brought with them an assortment of strangely heavy yellow pebbles in the bottom of their blue graniteware bucket. The riverbed was full of the things — so many that you could remove them with a shovel.

The adults in the party found these pebbles very interesting. One of them whacked one with a hammer on a wagon tire, and it mashed flat, like a lump of lead. Another figured out that these funny rocks made great fishing sinkers, and with their help they were able to get plenty to eat that night for the first time in a long time.

Then it came time to break camp, and the kids wanted to bring the funny yellow rocks with them as souvenirs.

Nothing doing, said the grown-ups. The oxen were already starving and barely pulling their weight; the whole wagon train was in imminent danger of exhaustion; there was no room for extra toys.

And so back into the river went the strange yellow pebbles, and on pressed the hard-pressed party — to The Dalles and eventually to the Willamette Valley, where they thought little more about the strangely heavy yellow pebbles in the blue water bucket until three years later, in 1848, when the California Gold Rush got started. And only then did they realize that they had camped next to a vast fortune in gold nuggets. If only they knew where that campsite was, they could go back and

Now, the "red flags" on this legend are legion. First of all, the idea that nobody in the party would have recognized the nuggets as gold even after one had been mashed on a wagon tire is highly suspect;

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remember, this was an age when people sometimes had to bite gold coins to verify that they were real.

Secondly, even if they had failed to recognize the pebbles as gold, wouldn't someone have brought some of them along as fishing tackle? Granted, they had lead for bullets, and could have made sinkers out of that; but bullets had their own uses on the trail. (Speaking of which, it's kind of silly to think that the party was desperate for fishing sinkers when they were, presumably, carrying bullets.)

And why are there no names associated with this story? Sure, the people involved could have tried to keep quiet about it, hoping to go back and cash in; but there were two or three years in which they supposedly had no idea what they'd found, and their unusually difficult Oregon Trail experience would have been a frequent topic of conversation with their new neighbors during that time. How is it that we don't know who they were? And how likely is it that those kids wouldn't have slipped a pebble or two into a pocket?

So there's pretty good reason to believe this story is, if not outright falsehood, at least greatly and imaginatively "augmented." But regardless of its "truthiness," it had a dramatic impact on the state's history.

The legend's results: In 1861, about a dozen years after the California Gold Rush broke out, a man named J.L. Adams showed up in Portland bragging that he'd found the Lost Blue Bucket Mine and claiming he was recruiting a party to help him work it. Most Portlanders didn't need to be asked twice. In a jiffy Adams had 58 men ready to go, and off they went.

The problem was, it quickly became obvious that he wasn't leading them anywhere in particular. He'd stop at promising looking creeks to shake some gravel around in his pan, and if he found a little he'd poke around there for days. In other words, he was acting like a man prospecting for a gold deposit, not a man who'd found a huge one and was on his way back to work it.

Finally, some other members of the party, grown suspicious, collared him and demanded answers. Faced with a hangman's noose, he confessed: He'd wanted to prospect in the Blue Mountains with a large enough party to fend off any hostile Native Americans, and had made up the whole story as a scheme to recruit one.

There followed a lively debate over whether or not to kill him. Some of the men he'd recruited had left crops rotting in the ground and land claims unproved-up to come with him on this sure-thing adventure, and they were now left completely twisting in the wind — a metaphorical circumstance that they were now eager to replicate for real with a rope, a stout tree, and J.L. Adams.

In the end, the volunteers decided not to kill him. Instead, they took everything but his clothes, kicked him out of camp, and started for home.

On the way, they crossed China Creek. This being a gold prospecting party, they didn't fail to dip their pans in its waters and sling some gravel around ... and when they did, they quickly realized they'd hit gold. Lots of it. It wasn't the Blue Bucket Mine, but it was a big enough strike for everyone to stake a lucrative claim — even Adams, who had been following the party scavenging food from camp leftovers.

The little tent camp that quickly grew up around the strike became a town, which was named Auburn.

The town of Blue Bucket has yet to be platted. Is it still out there, somewhere in the mountains of northeast Oregon, waiting for a weekend adventurer, elk hunter or fly fisherman to stumble upon it? Have subsequent floodwaters covered all the yellow pebbles with silt yards deep? Or did some crazy lonely prospector find it, mine it secretly, and disappear?

Let's face it: We'll never know. The one thing we do know is that generations of Oregonians have shared and appreciated and wondered about this story around campfires and over dinner tables for the past 170 years. And we know, too, that people looking for it have made history — and would not have done so had it not been for this bit of frontier folklore.

As a historical account, it's pretty sketchy. But as a piece of oral folklore, this story's place in state history is assured and well deserved.

Reprinted from [Off Beat Oregon](#)



The Cremation of Sam McGee

By Robert W. Service

A bunch of the boys were whooping it up in the Malamute saloon;
The kid that handles the music-box was hitting a jag-time tune;
Back of the bar, in a solo game, sat Dangerous Dan McGrew,
And watching his luck was his light-o'-love, the lady that's known as *Lou*.

When out of the night, which was fifty below, and into the din and the glare,
There stumbled a miner fresh from the creeks, dog-dirty, and loaded for bear.
He looked like a man with a foot in the grave and scarcely the strength of a louse,
Yet he tilted a poke of dust on the bar, and he called for drinks for the house.
There was none could place the stranger's face, though we searched ourselves for a clue;
But we drank his health, and the last to drink was Dangerous Dan McGrew.

There's men that somehow just grip your eyes, and hold them hard like a spell;
And such was he, and he looked to me like a man who had lived in hell;
With a face most hair, and the dreary stare of a dog whose day is done,
As he watered the green stuff in his glass, and the drops fell one by one.
Then I got to figgering who he was, and wondering what he'd do,
And I turned my head — and there watching him was the lady that's known as *Lou*.

His eyes went rubbering round the room, and he seemed in a kind of daze,
Till at last that old piano fell in the way of his wandering gaze.
The rag-time kid was having a drink; there was no one else on the stool,
So the stranger stumbles across the room, and flops down there like a fool.
In a buckskin shirt that was glazed with dirt he sat, and I saw him sway;
Then he clutched the keys with his talon hands — my God! but that man could play.

Were you ever out in the Great Alone, when the moon was awful clear,
And the icy mountains hemmed you in with a silence you most could hear;
With only the howl of a timber wolf, and you camped there in the cold,
A half-dead thing in a stark, dead world, clean mad for the muck called gold;
While high overhead, green, yellow and red, the North Lights swept in bars? —
Then you've a hunch what the music meant ... hunger and night and the stars.

And hunger not of the belly kind, that's banished with bacon and beans,
But the gnawing hunger of lonely men for a home and all that it means;
For a fireside far from the cares that are, four walls and a roof above;
But oh! so cramful of cosy joy, and crowned with a woman's love —
A woman dearer than all the world, and true as Heaven is true —
(God! how ghastly she looks through her rouge, — the lady that's known as *Lou*.)

Then on a sudden the music changed, so soft that you scarce could hear;
But you felt that your life had been looted clean of all that it once held dear;
That someone had stolen the woman you loved; that her love was a devil's lie;
That your guts were gone, and the best for you was to crawl away and die.
'Twas the crowning cry of a heart's despair, and it thrilled you through and through —
"I guess I'll make it a spread misère", said Dangerous Dan McGrew.

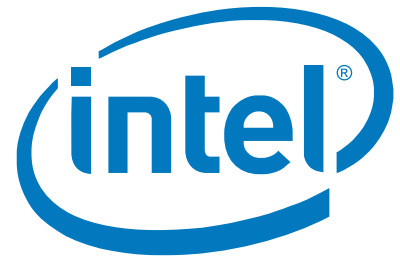
The music almost died away ... then it burst like a pent-up flood;
And it seemed to say, "Repay, repay," and my eyes were blind with blood.
The thought came back of an ancient wrong, and it stung like a frozen lash,
And the lust awoke to kill, to kill ... then the music stopped with a crash,
And the stranger turned, and his eyes they burned in a most peculiar way;
In a buckskin shirt that was glazed with dirt he sat, and I saw him sway;
Then his lips went in in a kind of grin, and he spoke, and his voice was calm,
And "Boys," says he, "you don't know me, and none of you care a damn;
But I want to state, and my words are straight, and I'll bet my poke they're true,
That one of you is a hound of hell ... and that one is Dan McGrew."

Then I ducked my head, and the lights went out, and two guns blazed in the dark,
And a woman screamed, and the lights went up, and two men lay stiff and stark.
Pitched on his head, and pumped full of lead, was Dangerous Dan McGrew,
While the man from the creeks lay clutched to the breast of the lady that's known as *Lou*.

These are the simple facts of the case, and I guess I ought to know.
They say that the stranger was crazed with "hooch," and I'm not denying it's so.
I'm not so wise as the lawyer guys, but strictly between us two —
The woman that kissed him and — pinched his poke —
was the lady that's known as *Lou*.



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