

Winter has gold in his blood

By Dan Mancuso
IVN Staff

Egbert "Bud" Winter placed a gold nugget down on a chair in the *Illinois Valley News* office. Next, using a special rod with gold in the tip, Winter held the rod in both hands. Slowly the rod started to rock back and forth in the direction of the gold nugget. Gold witching is similar to water witching. "If you have the right kind of electricity in your body you can make it work. I only know of one other person that can do it," Winter said.

Winter got his start in mining in 1930 when the Humphreys Mining Company came to Spearfish, South Dakota to drill a creek bed. "They needed someone to do the pan and I had some experience with it so I said, 'I'll work for ya.'" At the time Winter was getting an \$18 a week paycheck and "that's pretty good for back then," Winter added.

When asked why he liked to chase gold, Winter didn't have a good answer, but he did say he liked the color.

In addition to gold, Winter was also fond of Waunetta Cunningham, who he met and married in Shoshone, Wyoming in 1947. In April 2016,

Waunetta Winter died at the age of 90, a few months before their 69th wedding anniversary.

Winter, a Sheridan, Ore. native, was born in 1914, had a knack for mining gold. Winter would travel the western states to help set up mining operations. Winter also designed a cone that is still used today to separate tailings.

After a full life of chasing gold, trucking in Wyoming and the Dakotas, to bootlegging whiskey from Chicago and finally ending up in the Bay area, Winter came to the Valley in 1973 to relax after retiring as a heavy equipment operator.

Over the years, plenty has changed according to Winter, "Back in the day we never had any trouble with the environmental types. We would fix things. We just did what they wanted us to do." And he added, "You have to get along with people."

There is still plenty of gold in the area. Winter said there is a lot of the gold still in the ground but it is too expensive to retrieve. "You will go broke trying to get it out."

For recreational gold panners, Winter suggested going to Josephine or Patrick creeks as a place to take children to learn how to pan gold.

Winter has started a new chapter in his life. Recently, Winter sold his land on Holland Loop and moved to Crescent City to live with his daughter. The spry 103-year-old is more than capable

of living alone but the recent loss of Waunetta has him wanting different scenery. "I need a change, I see her everywhere I look and I miss her," a teary-eyed Winter said.



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, *Illinois Valley News*)

On Friday, Feb. 3 at the *Illinois Valley News* office, Bud Winter (left) along with Tarry Frank, shows a gold nugget he found in the Illinois Valley during his gold panning days.

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