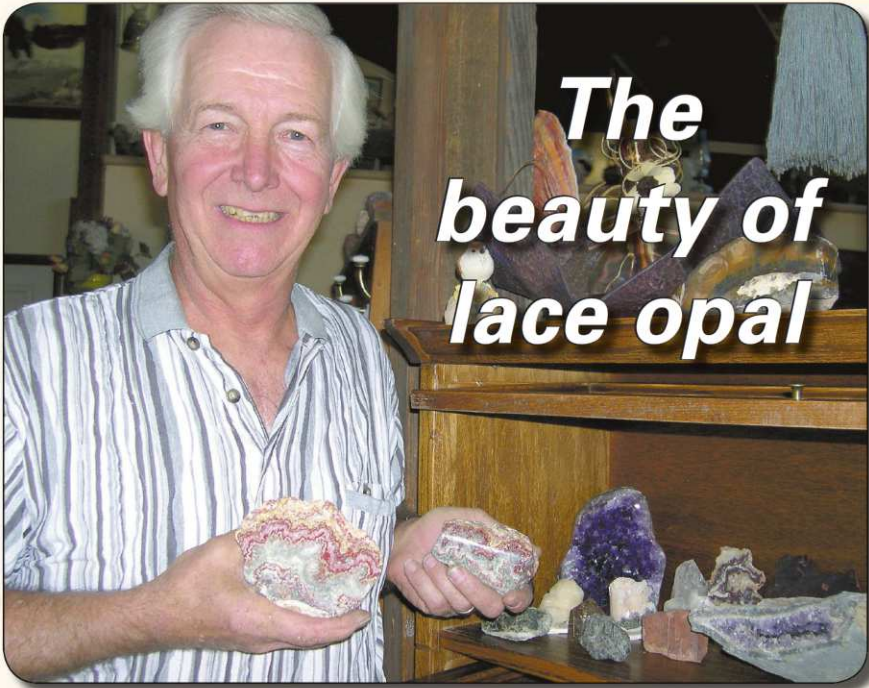


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The beauty of lace opal

Photos by Verna Barr

Larry Wright holds two fine examples of cut and polished lace opals that were extracted from a mine in central Utah owned by Larry and his wife, Joyce. The display case holds a wide variety of stones from their own collection including amethyst, calcite crystals, quartz crystals, tourmaline and more.

BY VERNA BARR

Staff Writer

Not everyone who hunts for rocks and gem stones has his own mining claim. Much like the miners on the television show "Prospectors," Larry and Joyce Wright have been mining their 20-acre surface claim in central Utah for the past five years.

The site was discovered quite by accident while crossing the area known to rock hounds looking for opals. They were covering ground that had been previously burned and more recently been bulldozed. Glancing down, they saw an interesting stone. They picked up several, then went on to their planned destination.

When they got home, cleaned and examined what they had found, they couldn't identify the stones. These weren't of gem quality, though interesting enough to return to the site three times that same year and find quality marketable pieces.

They had only been rock hounds for about a year and a half and had been lucky enough to discover an unknown rock formation formed in seams only three to five feet underground. Since they were believed to be the very first to discover the unusual formation, the Wrights were able to name what they had found. They chose Utah Lace Opal because of the wavy lacy appearance of the colored layers in a geo-

thermal formation.

About 1900 years ago a geyser erupted causing water containing acids and minerals to form the various patterns as they solidified. These stones are still wet at the time they are mined, so it is easy to see the lacy patterns on the surface. They are found in seams from about one-half-inch to a foot wide. As they mine, they choose only the best pieces to carry to a nearby trailer to bring home.

Larry cuts the rocks into shapes saying, "That's exciting as I see new patterns and colors with each cut. Next comes polishing ... not so much fun!"

Joyce makes many of the smaller pieces into one-of-a-kind jewelry: earrings, pendants, broaches and more. She has learned wire wrapping using two, three and four gold or sterling silver wires. The color of the wires and wrapping styles are chosen especially to compliment the coloring and size of each stone.

Their home is a place to display many of their favorite lace opals and other rocks and gemstones. Each piece has a special place on shelves, divider walls, cases and tables.

Larger examples are kept for display, sold or traded at rock and gem shows. The Wrights attend many of these shows each year. Among them was the Rock and Gem show held at Bill Heddles Recreation Center in Delta on June 1 this year. Some of the others where they show their lace opals are held in Tucson and Albuquerque, New Mexico, Buena Vista, Wood-



Making jewelry from lace opal and other rocks and gemstones is much more than a hobby for Joyce Wright. It is an interest that she and her husband Larry share together. She is holding a wire-wrapped pendant made of ammonite in her right hand, one of turquoise in the other hand, and is wearing a pendant of lace opal.



Some examples of the jewelry, including earrings and pendant made of jasper with bumble bee colorings and a pendant of green chracolla with a vug (hole in the rock).



Look closely at these display pieces. All are lace opal and give the viewer a good look at the wavy layers and colors, each different from one to the other. It's obvious why Larry and Joyce chose Lace Opal when given the opportunity to name their find.

land Park, Colorado Springs, and the Coliseum in Denver, and more.

They have chosen the name Aspen Rock and Gem and at times have some items on display at their business, Wright Distributing Inc., located at the south end of Cedaredge on Highway 65. They also have a web site at www/laceopals.com

at any time, whether to their mine or to a show. It has a larger living space than their previous one, giving space for their display items, a larger cooking area and a bed that doesn't require climbing up into an overhead bunk.

Larry and Joyce have been lucky in finding their mine. More than that they discovered an interest that they both are enthusiastic about and can share together.



Lace opal, like other stones, can be cut and shaped into interesting display pieces. Spheres and egg-shaped pieces show off the intricate veining found in lace opal. The stones were taken from the Wright's mine and shaped by someone else.

Main St. Gallery moves back to Main Street

BY HANK LOHMEYER

Staff Writer

Munson's Main Street Gallery is moving back to Main Street.

Tracy Munson told the DCI last week that she is moving her retail gallery and jewelry store from the AppleShed back to her former location on Main Street next to Starr's Guitars.

Munson had moved her

store to the AppleShed last September prior to the Main Street reconstruction project, which officials say will be completed soon.

She rented out her Main Street space during that time to another business which has since shut its doors.

With new sidewalks and street lighting in place now, Munson said that she saw the opportunity to return downtown.

"I didn't really plan it like that," she said. "Things just worked out that way."

The coffee shop that had briefly occupied Munson's building gave her a new idea to use in her own business. As part of her rental agreement with that business she inherited a coffee making machine.

"About half the space will be for the gallery and other items, and the other half will be a coffee shop," she said.

"I hope it will be a place downtown where people can come and visit, or do business, or just hang out for a while," she said.

Sale raises \$1,334 for local fund

The annual Fritchman Orchards end-of-season benefit fruit sale raised approximately \$1,334, the DCI has been informed.

The proceeds from this year's sale are being donated to the Bruin Boys Fund. The sale was held Nov. 2 at the orchard's store in Eckert.



Photo by Hank Lohmeyer

Desert island oasis

A well-tended orchard sitting perched overlooking the desert landscape of Currant Creek in the middle distance is a testimony to the productive value of Delta County's irrigated agriculture and to the local producers who make it work.

Restaurant at golf club closes

BY HANK LOHMEYER

Staff Writer

Following three hectic weeks of efforts by Cedaredge town officials to keep the Cedaredge Golf Club's Wildfire Restaurant open, it stood closed last weekend.

A Saturday evening music concert by Dr. Mary Kleinsorge had to be cancelled, and it remains unclear whether the facility will be available for profitable party and group engagements this holiday season.

Town officials received notice on Oct. 23 that restaurant lessee Curt Smelser was stepping out of the business, said town administrator



Katie Sickles. The notification prompted a closed-door negotiation process including at least two special weekend meetings of the trustees, with executive sessions to try and hammer out terms of a transition.

Another special meeting

with a long executive session was held on Wednesday, Nov. 6. That meeting attracted an audience of more than a dozen people wanting to witness the final outcome of the negotiations.

A sticking point in negotiations was whether the Wildfire's pizza oven, a massive structure assembled of brick and stone, would remain or be disassembled and removed. The issue was resolved, Sickles told the DCI, with an agreement whereby the town will pay Smelser \$27,008 for certain "trade fixtures" and other items he is leaving behind, including a \$10,000 payout for leaving the pizza oven in

place.

Trustee Ray Hanson told the DCI that town officials learned during negotiations that the restaurant had been in difficult financial condition and that other investors had been sought for some time. At the Nov. 6 meeting, Smelser said to the town board, "I'm free at last."

By Friday morning, town staff was at work in the restaurant overseeing an inventory of the liquor and food on hand.

The whirlwind negotiations had also focused on trying to find someone to take over management and operations of the golf club restaurant. Town board members were

neither enthusiastic about nor willing to add managing a restaurant to the Town of Cedaredge's current suite of business enterprises. But the town also wanted to see the eatery stay open.

It appeared the effort would be successful — an employee of the restaurant offered to take over the operation. Trustees were told at the Nov. 6 meeting that the employee would be looking for bank financing because he didn't have money for payroll, for the next food order, or for other expenses. Nevertheless, the board authorized the town clerk to issue a temporary liquor license for

WILDFIRE CLOSING TO C2



Photo by Hank Lohmeyer

Members of the Cedaredge Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors gathered last week for an official presentation to the Cedaredge Police Department's community K-9 fund. The chamber raised \$1,115.50 from a silent auction event during the Golden Gala and the money will be used to help purchase a replacement K-9 member of the CPD to take over from Buddy. Shown presenting the check to Chief Dan Sanders is Dottie Whitlock, chamber board member.

Chamber contributes to Cedaredge K-9 fund

BY HANK LOHMEYER

Staff Writer

The community's fund raising effort for a new K-9 police dog to replace K-9 Buddy of the Cedaredge Police Department got a boost last week.

A check for \$1,115.50 was presented last week by the Cedaredge Area Chamber of Commerce for the CPD's K-9 fund.

Presenting the check to Chief Dan Sanders was Dottie Whitlock, CACC board president.

The event took place during the monthly chamber board meeting last week. The CACC raised the funds from a silent auction held at the Golden Gala during this year's AppleFest, a CACC sponsored

event.

Sanders said that the community has raised over \$7,000 for a new police dog.

In other business at the chamber's monthly board meeting, treasurer Lesley Lewis reported that the AppleFest had more booth participants and raised more money from space rentals than last year. Expenses were "significantly less" than last year also. The event is the chamber's major fundraiser of the year.

"It was a very successful AppleFest in a lot of ways," Lewis said.

The Golden Gala cut expenses and ended as a \$2,000 expense to the chamber as opposed to the \$5,300

in expenses it incurred last year. Help with decorations and from local restaurants on food preparation were the major contributors to lower costs.

"Graystone, RJs, Creekside, Daveto's, and Drost's Chocolates provided the food and candy, and did a fabulous job of keeping costs down," said Gretchen Atkinson, chamber administrator.

Chamber President Larry Murphy reported that a total of \$2,300 had been raised from the sale of chamber Shoppers Cards. Most of the sales came from efforts of high school students, he said. All of the money raised from the cards is being donated this year to the CHS athletic department.

Veterans honored at military ball

BY HANK LOHMEYER

Staff Writer

Veterans and America's military services were honored during an evening of socializing and music at the Stolte Shed in Cedaredge on Nov. 9.

The second annual Stars and Stripes Military Ball was hosted by event organizers Cathy and Mike Meskel, with help from friends.

The Stolte Shed was decorated in tasteful, professional-looking arrays of red, white, and blue streamers and lights, hung by patriotic friends of the Meskels. Old Glory was in prominent display, and the evening's events spoke to the courage and commitment that have brought blessings of peace and prosperity to America through the sacrifice of its own people in the military services.

Music from the 50s, 60s, and 70s played as guests, some in formal and semi-for-

mal attire and others wearing their smartly fitting military uniforms, enjoyed a catered supper and an open invitation to dance.

The evening's program schedule included a vocal performance honoring the evening's theme and presented by the choir of the Cedaredge Community United Methodist Church.

The several dozen guests were served promptly, efficiently and politely by the youth group from Cedaredge Assembly of God. And clean-up following the event was to be assisted by the Cedaredge High School FFA and by Boy Scouts.

Cathy Meskel is a dedicated supporter of America's armed forces and has conducted numerous events and activities on her own initiative in support of both active duty and retired military service members.



Photo by Hank Lohmeyer

Commemorative photos with a patriotic setting were available to guests at the second annual Stars and Stripes Military Ball last Saturday.