

# Golden Times

Newsletter of the  
World Goldpanning Association



Spring 2011







## Welcome!

Welcome to the first Golden Times issue in 2011!

We are very happy to read that some of you panners have had great adventures or ideas and would like to share them with us in this spring issue of Golden Times. Unfortunately, there is also sad news as some of our golden friends past away.

We would like to thank all the people who submitted articles and other contributions. Thank you very much! And keep up the good work!

If you feel inspired to make a contribution and share a great story or picture with the goldpanning world in the next edition of Golden Times, please send it to

[esther@worldgoldpanningassociation.org](mailto:esther@worldgoldpanningassociation.org)

Golden greetings,  
Your WGA Communications Committee:

Esther van Diggelen  
Georgina Friend  
Gonneke Cornelisse  
Kim Hillier

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## 1. Let me tell you...

Here we are again, my Golden Friends, this time already thinking to pack to Złotoryja!

Winter is behind us in Europe and panning season 2011 is already started while on the other half of Earth our friends are lighting autumn fires.

Let me start these words of mine with a great friendly hug to our gold-mates from Japan: they recently suffered a blow from their own homeland soil and I want to wish them our "get well soon".

As you know, my vision of our Organisation is like a family of friends from all over the World and I know you all, as I did, did

thinking to their problems. What I wish is to see Japanese delegation standing again among us as soon as possible, maybe already this year in Poland and in near future another World event in their land. Japan, our thoughts are with you.

Another thought of mine goes out to two Goldpanners and friends we recently lost: Laura Gautier from France and Josef Stöckl from Austria. We will miss you both at the venue of next Championships. Rest in peace and have a look at us now and then, please...

Year 2011 is going to be exciting. As an example

here in Italy we are going to have our 30<sup>th</sup> edition of National Championships! Isn't it so interesting?

But this make me thinking about how old our organisation is: if some Nation can have a history so long, as Finland that started the whole thing, like Italy that had 30 editions in a row, many other Nation have started their championships in the distant past. Then, as we are with 21 Nations today being part of W.G.A. it will be more and more difficult to find a "good spot" on the calendar to save the date.

That's the matter.

What I noticed on our calendar is a multiple insertion of Championships



on the same date (i.e. 3/5 June...) or very close geographically (i.e. the now solved problem of Sweden/Finland). If we are able, in the near future, to better organize a calendar of our events we will face a larger participation in every championships and each of them will be more interesting to take part. Am I right?

Maybe a solution will be to give the Competition Committee the supervision of the whole calendar (?). Or is preferable the rule "first come - first served"? Let's think about it.

On Championships and Competitions area, let me tell you, I am really glad we are going toward interesting times, when all the winners will be entitled

World Champions and no more futile discussion will raise... Hopefully!

As you probably already know, we didn't meet as W.G.A. Board on last Spring. Due to difficulties in finding a proper date and thinking about saving W.G.A. money, we decided to have as much as possible contacts throughout the web: internet, e-mail, skype, Facebook and so on are very useful in these times.

In doing so, the Board had some new ideas to raise on next A.G.M. and some new items to discuss with National delegates. So, be ready to share the agenda items of 2011 AGM with your Nation mates, prepare a good speech in the debate, as that is what

I want to see (hear) while in Złotoryja.

Golden greetings to you all for upcoming Summer time and see you all in Poland!

Yours,  
Arturo

***"What I wish is to see Japanese delegation standing again among us as soon as possible, and in near future another World event in their land.***

***Japan, our thoughts are with you."***





## 2. Goldpanning South Africa

Two youngsters from Port Elizabeth, South Africa, came to visit Pilgrim's Rest. They wanted to experience and try their hand at gold panning. They were very relaxed and had the attitude that it will be extremely easy. To them, gold panning was:

- Get into the pan dams;
- Put the sand in the pan;
- Shake it;
- And pick all the gold nuggets out.....as easy as that!

Little did they know how much skill and experience were actually needed to get the fine pieces of gold! The photos reflect their jovial mood when they were on their way (photo

1). The second photo speaks for itself... "not so easy!" About 25 minutes later they were still struggling. What a rude awakening – and serious introduction to gold panning!

This experience made them realize that gold panning is a skill in itself, and needs a lot of practice.

Our message to all gold panners across the globe is: **PRACTICE**, and come to the 2012 World Gold Panning Championships in the beautiful village of Pilgrim's Rest, Mpumalanga, South Africa.

Isabel Jacobs & Christine Rowe



Photo 3



Photo 1



Photo 2



### 3. Electric stopwatch

One of the weakest links in running the gold panning competition nowadays is manual time keeping. There is always a great possibility of human mistake which can be even several seconds – and in our sport it might be a fatal mistake. Timekeeper persons have different reaction times and different interpretation of competitors stop signals. Last but not least, they are vulnerable to external interference.

To avoid the problem in Finland there is developed a first prototype of electric stopwatch based on normal laptop computer running Windows XP and Office 2007 (Excel 2007). In the system each competitor stops his/her own clock by pressing the button and only one clock is running in the PC, so all competitors are running

on same time base. As the competitor is in charge, there is no room for protests or accusations, nor need to check the video for timing issues. Electric stopwatch demands less people for the arrangements and there is no need to interpret stop signals. One of the most beneficial issues is that it enables real time result screen for the audience – this makes following the competition more exciting.

The system cause less visual stop signal. This might be compensated by proper voice feedback from stop signal (from PC to loudspeakers). Also the system demands to change rules for the stop signal. Further development challenges are to study possibilities for better timing resolution as now results rounded to 0.1 seconds, expanding for

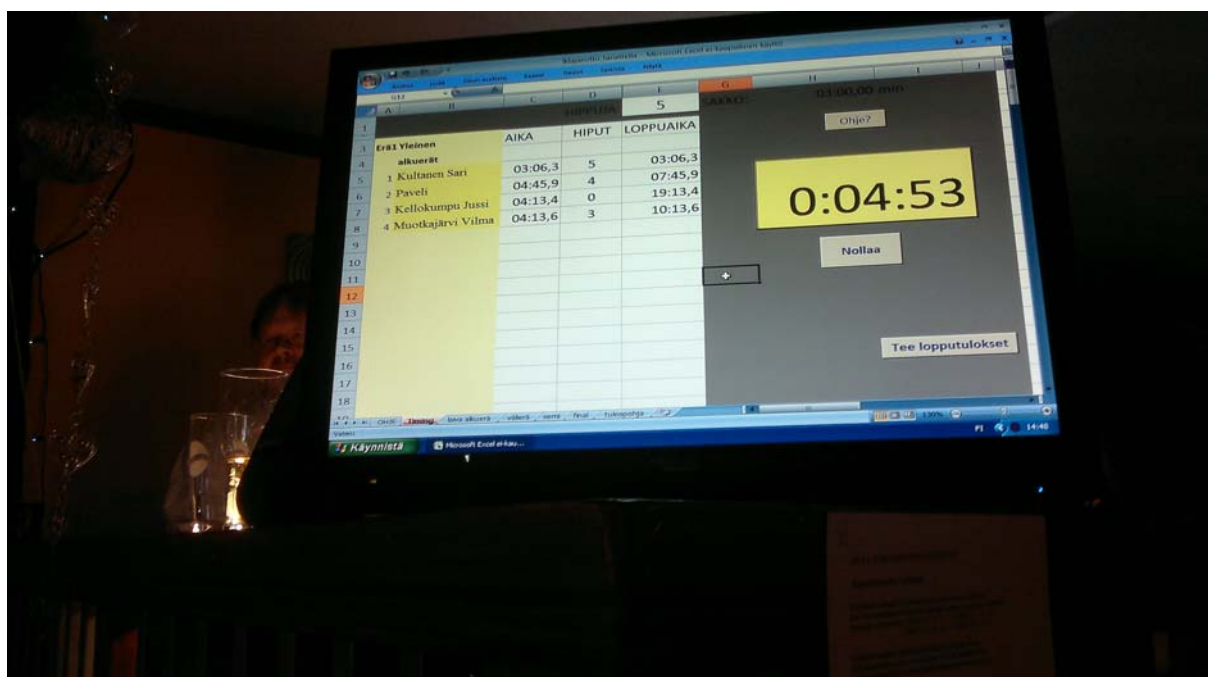
more competitors as the limitations is 24 channels now, and implementation of screen for audience. And of course, the computers can collapse – usually in worse possible moment.

The wireless system would also be a great improvements and it's said some other country is already working with it.

However, this is just a beginning. The system is tested in a few smaller inside competitions in Finland, and so far it has worked well. The system is easy to learn within a few minutes if the user is familiar with Excel. More testing will be done in the future competitions aiming to take it into routine service.

Jouko Korhonen

***“In this system each competitor stops his/her own clock by pressing the button!”***



## 4. River panning season opens in Biella!

Sunday April 10th marked the first gold panning outing of the season for the Biella Goldpanners' Association in Italy. The weather was perfect- a warm spring day with blue skies and the gentlest of breezes. Participants met at 9am at a well-known landmark and were led to the designated spot on the river banks by Walter, who had been involved the previous week in selecting the best location- (more on that later...) no mean feat, as several factors had to be taken into consideration including, obviously, the presence of gold, accessibility for large numbers of panners of all age-groups and, believe it or not for April, shade from the sun!

We were expecting some neophytes to join us and were naturally reluctant for them to lose their initial enthusiasm for gold panning due to sprained ankles or sunstroke- not to mention a complete absence of the yellow metal! At the same time

we were keen to maintain and perhaps even whet the appetites of our familiar old-timers by introducing a change to our usual programme. And so it was that some 50 enthusiasts found themselves on the banks of the.... no! not the legendary Elvo ....but its sister river the Cervo!

There was a frenzy to set up sluices and search for a good "point" but by mid-morning most had found spots to their liking and work was well underway. Members and friends of all ages took part. Some took the opportunity to combine panning with tanning and could be seen relaxing on sun-loungers while their pans were temporarily abandoned!

Experienced panners like Bruno lent their skills to help new friends master the art of panning. Results were closely scrutinized!! Mia and Paul counted their flakes carefully...

**"On the banks of the....  
no! not the legendary Elvo ....  
but its sister river the Cervo!"**





Lunchtime was a merry affair, dedicated not only to culinary and alcoholic delights (this IS Italy!!!) but also to catching up with goldpanning news and plans as well as personal tales of a long and pretty harsh winter.

Some chose siesta time for a good snooze; children played in the sand or approached the quite icy water with squeals of delight disguised as terror; a few of the more intrepid panners disdained a long lunch break, preferring instead to increase the numbers of flakes in their tubes. These flakes were of smaller dimensions than those of the Elvo so, in order to take home a good sample, hard work was required.

In the afternoon we were joined by a group of interested tourists, members of a community association, for whom it was the very first time to approach the hobby of panning. They were consigned into the very capable hands of Arturo who took them through the paces.

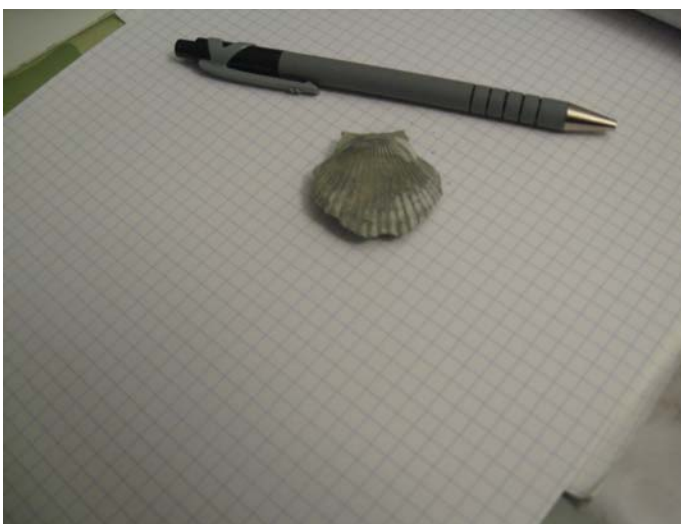
The outing came to a close

at about 5pm and the general consensus was positive in that members and friends (old and new) had enjoyed the carefree and friendly atmosphere (no yellow cards here!!), the unseasonably warm but very pleasant weather, the gold in our tubes—somewhat less than what our beloved Elvo usually yields but all the more welcome for that.

We agreed to revisit the Cervo when its waters have abated a little— not in the search for gold on this occasion but to explore the magnificent, deep, river-gulley discovered by the members who carried out the initial, reconnaissance assay. It contains a treasure of very large, fossilized sea-shells (see photo of small shell) and the claws of marine creatures among other things— testimony to ancient times when this area was covered by a great sea.

Exciting, yes? But..... can a river feel pangs of jealousy? Will the Elvo ever forgive us!!?

Geraldine McGrossan





## 5. Złotoryja 2011



The 35-th World Goldpanning Championships are approaching us with big steps. This August we will meet in the oldest polish town of Złotoryja. The competitions are being held together with celebrations of the eight hundred years jubilee of our town Złotoryja, so you will all be part of unforgettable championships!

Using the last occasion we would like to cordially invite you to all the festivities and give you some organizational information .

From Saturday 20 August a free campsite will be waiting for you .

The Race Office (for registration) is located at the championship area and will be open Saturday and Sunday from 10:00 - 20:00 and Monday from 8:00 - 22:00.

After Monday 22:00 it is no longer possible to sign up for the official categories. Prior

registration is possible only with the form available at [www.zlotoryja2011.pl](http://www.zlotoryja2011.pl)

Information about the official traditional panning category, an accurate description and photo of the bowl can be found on the web.

Championships .  
Registration for the unofficial last category will be subject to availability limits but no longer than 2 hours before the start of the categories (in order of payment).

Fun events are :

- Traditional-bowl-night-Klondike
- Gold panning, which will be held on Saturday, August 27
- Amateurs
- Children under 12 years

Currency circulating in the professions (including venues) will be PLN and EURO. The fees will be accepted only in those

currencies during the championship at their disposal, and tourists will exchange currency.

The opening ceremony begins with a colorful parade through the streets on 22 August.

On Wednesday August 24th the WGA Annual General Meeting will be held at the Palace of Krotoszyce. Transport is provided by the organizers.

The next day, Thursday 25 August presentation of the organizers of the World Cup South Africa 2012. In addition, the extra attractions will be a soccer match between Poland and the Rest of the World on August 28 to celebrate 35<sup>th</sup> the World Cup finals .

After all the categories we will host the tournament among former champions in gold panning (Please confirm your participation in the tournament in the category profile Woman / Men of all editions of the World Cup).







## 6. Agenda of the 2011 WGA Annual General Meeting

13 June, 2011

To: National Delegates of the WGA Member Nations

Obj: WGA AGM, Wednesday, 24th August 2011 at 7.30 pm, Palace Krotzycach, Zlotoryja, Poland

Dear delegates,

We are pleased to invite you to attend the W.G.A. annual General Meeting which will take place at Palace Krotzycach, Zlotoryja, Poland on Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> of August at 7.30 pm. Please find attached (below) the preliminary agenda of the meeting. We would appreciate if you can prepare for this meeting by having a good look at the agenda and consult with the panners you represent before the meeting.

If there is anything missing from the agenda that you or the people you represent would like to bring forward at the AGM, please let us know in advance. This allows us to reserve time during the meeting to discuss your subject. And more important, it allows other representatives to think about your subject in advance and consult the panners they represent.

Could you please provide the names of your country's delegates who will attend the AGM this year? You can do this by replying to this email, send an email to

[president@worldgoldpanningassociation.org](mailto:president@worldgoldpanningassociation.org) or [secretary@worldgoldpanningassociation.org](mailto:secretary@worldgoldpanningassociation.org) or

alternatively by giving the names to the organizing committee once you are in Zlotoryja. Please note that only two delegates are allowed to attend the meeting from each member country.

Thank you in advance. See you soon in Zlotoryja!

On behalf of the WGA Board

Pirjo Muotkajärvi  
WGA Secretary



### Agenda of the Meeting

- Opening, welcome and legality
- President's report
- Financial report
- Communications report
- Competitions report
  - Report by Competition Committee
  - Proposal for a change in the competition rules:
    - Divide the Veterans category into the Veteran Men and Veteran Women to allow fairer competition.
- Bidding to host future World- and European Championships
  - *Please let us know in advance the biddings.*
- Other business
  - *Please let us know in advance if you have something to add to the agenda to allow sufficient time to discuss your subject.*
- Board Election – Secretary
  - Election of the Board Member takes place every three year and Pirjo Muotkajärvi has served as a Secretary three years.
  - *Please let us know in advance the candidates for the position.*
- Closure



## Josef Stöckl †

Am 30. 03.2011 verstarb unerwartet unser österreichischer Freund und Goldwäscher Josef Stöckl, aus St. Martin im Innkreis im 70. Lebensjahr. Josef hat seinen Claim für immer verlassen.

Er war als Goldwäscher immer ein gern gesehener Gast. Bei der Weltmeisterschaft in Kopparberg 1991 (Schweden) konnte Josef seinen größten Erfolg mit dem Weltmeistertitel in der Profi-Herren Kategorie feiern. Josef organisierte auch vier mal das bei Vielen beliebte Innviertler Goldwaschen in Auroldmünster. Sein letzter großer Erfolg war der WM Titel mit dem Nationalteam 2009 in Spanien. Sein letzter großer Erfolg war der WM Titel mit dem Nationalteam 2009 in Spanien. Für seine Leistungen als 3 facher Weltmeister im Goldwaschen verlieh ihm die Marktgemeinde St. Martin im Innkreis den „Ehrenkrug der Marktgemeinde“.

Wir werden Josef Stöckl in ewiger Erinnerung halten. Wir haben einen großen Goldwäscherfreund verloren.

*On 30 03.2011 our Austrian friend and gold-diggers Josef Stöckl, past away unexpectedly at St. Martin im Innkreis at the age of 70. Joseph has left his claim forever.*

*He was always a welcome guest at gold panning. At the World Cup in Kopparberg 1991 in Sweden Josef experienced his greatest success by winning the title World Champion in the category for professional Men. Joseph also organized four times at the popular Thank Innviertler gold panning in Auroldmünster, Austria. His last major success was the World Cup title with the National Team 2009 in Spain. For his achievements as a three-time World Champion gold panning the market town of St. Martin im Innkreis awarded the "Honour pitcher of the market town".*

*We will keep Josef Stöckl in permanent memory. We have lost a great friend of panning for gold.*

Freizeit & Goldwaschverein „Die Waschbären“

Christian Wolf



## Laura Gautier †

J'ai une tristesse nouvelle à vous annoncer: Laura Gautier nous a quitté le 3 janvier 2011. Son combat avec la maladie fut difficile, mais la voilà maintenant apaisée auprès de Gilles.

*I have a sad announcement to you: Laura Gautier left us. She past away on January 3rd 2011. Her combat with the disease was difficult, but now she is with Gilles.*

Emmanuelle Bonnaire

Présidente de l'Association des Orpailleurs de Champagne







## 8. New mining law finalized in Finland

The parliament finalized the new mining law in Finland. Gold miners fears came into reality:

professional mining in Lemmenjoki is to be banned and all the mining concessions are ended.

The only good thing is that the miners managed to get a transition period of nine years. All the fees are getting higher making recreational prospecting more and more expensive. After a few weeks of the decision the biggest party, who strongly pushed the

law through, suffered the great loss in the parliamentary election- but the damage was done.

Record high gold price is the only comfort for this situation.



*“The professional mining in Finland is frozen!”*



## 9. Change in competition rules

As agreed at last year's AGM all team competitions are now official categories.

Consequently, the official rules now also apply for these events. This means that the amount of flakes

in all team competitions is now 10-20 flakes, where before this was only the case for the national team event.

Most organizers already applied these rules, so the change for competition will

be minimal.

The new version of the competition rules is available via the website

[www.w-g-a.org](http://www.w-g-a.org)





## 10. Gold, it runs in the family

This story started about 35 years ago. My grandmother who was living in a old folks home had in her drawer a small glass tube with a few specks off real gold in it . And when you're a child you would romance all kinds of stories about the origin of it .

The truth was not as romantic as I had hoped, during the late fifties, early sixties the economy wasn't that good in the Netherlands. Two off my mom's sisters emigrated to New Zealand, to find a new place to build a future . Their mother (my grandmother) visited them a few times and on one of those trips she went gold panning with her children and grandchildren.

My grandmother has died nearly 15 years ago and when my mother asked me what I wanted from here inheritance, the first thing that crossed my mind was the glass tube ! But it wasn't until last year that I have started investigating the true story about the tube.

Long before I got in touch with the worldwide gold panning family, my own family had done their share of gold panning.

My grandmother in 1972 (I was 8 years old) started it all in a town called Cromwell , a have asked

my family in New Zealand if there was any photo material from that event . After a few emails they have found just one slide of grandmother panning for gold . I was so happy about the fact that there was evidence of that event! Once I saw the photo I was a little bit disappointed, grandmother wasn't holding a gold pan in her hand but here shoes ! I guess the rest of the family put all the found in the tube to give her a nice souvenir from here visit.

I have asked my own mother who has visited her sisters if she had any photo's, and indeed she had. She had a nice photo from herself gold panning in the river Arrow in Arrowtown, but according to her journal she had a nice time but did not find any gold. This all happened in 1982.

We , Mireille and me visited New Zealand ourselves in 1992 and according to the "Lonely planet travelers guide" it was a must to go gold panning in Arrowtown, and so we did.

Although it was our first time, and after a few tips from a original kiwi goldpanner we also found some gold.

It wasn't untill 2000 that I have entered my first competition in Germany, and that was where I got



Grandma 'panning' in Crommwell



Mom panning in Arrowtown



Our family in Biella, Italy

hooked by the virus that makes us all family!

As you perhaps know our two daughters are now also panning in competitions, so that makes four generations of goldpanners!

Maybe this is not really special in some places in the world, but it is when you were born in the Netherlands!!

Frenk Hink





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Golden Times  
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## World Goldpanning Association

[www.w-g-a.org](http://www.w-g-a.org)

Please send contributions for the next Golden Times to

[esther@worldgoldpanningassociation.org](mailto:esther@worldgoldpanningassociation.org)



**World Goldpanning Championships**

**22-28 August 2011**

**Złotoryja, Poland**