



Klint Washburn and his business partner, Ken Snyder, partially owe the success of the Gold Claw to their wives since that's how they first met. Both men had been working for the same company but hadn't previously connected with one another. It was during a social outing where Klint was a key speaker that their wives got to talking about how both of their husbands were "crazy gold guys." Shortly after, Ken received a call from Klint: "I hear you're a gold guy." Klint got straight to the point, filling Ken in on a project he'd been working on. As it turned out, the men lived just 10 minutes away from each other. Ken paid Klint a visit to "see if (his project) was BS or not." When Klint showed Ken the prototype for his Gold Claw device (they "hesitate to call it a pan"), Ken "couldn't believe how fast it went without losing hardly any gold."

Klint explained to Ken the science behind the geology, just like Klint's dad had first done with Klint when he was a boy. "He educated me to the world of physics and why displacement works the way it does," Ken explained. "If we can convince our group of miners and prospectors that they need to start using the same forces that nature is using, just imagine what that will do to their success rate."

Klint always "got in trouble as a kid making inventions" and is a self-proclaimed lifelong tech geek. He first became interested in prospecting as a boy when his dad would take him out during his geology trips for work. His dad always had tons of projects lined up, so Klint was exposed to a rich climate of problem solving from an early age. He vividly recalls excursions

to Nevada and marveling at the interesting equipment they had out there to catch gold. "Dad would describe how water uses suspension forces to pick up material. He taught me the physics of it, explaining how surface-to-volume ratio worked. How, when water rushes through, there was the need to exert forces to move the sand and therefore move the gold," Klint reminisces. "I'd ask him, why are you using suspension? What about the weight? And he would tell me how that is the way they've been separating gold since the time of the Egyptians. But I knew there had to be a better way. And there is."

"The whole DIGS (Displacement Induced Gold Separation) concept was born, and I fell in love with it. It's defying Mother Nature! It just got into my soul," Klint goes on. After spending so much time on the sidelines during his dad's projects, helping out behind the scenes, Klint had an opportunity to put his own ideas into play when his dad retired. But "he didn't retire with success," he retired because he was frustrated and tired of litigation and crazy partnerships. His dad was "down in the dumps." This bothered Klint, and he wanted to help.

Klint's time spent working with his dad was usually on massive, complex projects. So Klint decided to make something simple. "Gold pans were driving me crazy," admits Klint. "I wanted to find something faster and more efficient. I knew what it would take to make one, so I put everything on pause and just built the pan first." And so, the Gold Claw was born.

It was Ken who initially suggested that the men get the Gold Claw in front of people, so he went ahead and called up the GPAA. "The biggest obstacle a startup business has is get-



ting in front of the community during a product launch. There's a really short wave you can ride to get in front of the right people and to get the momentum you need, so we really wanted to take advantage of our first series of shows," says Klint. The men didn't really know what to expect or what they were getting into. They'd been to a few trade shows here and there, but nothing on the level that they wanted. They knew that the success of their business was in the hands of their community, and they turned to the GPAA for assistance.

Ken and Klint loaded every pan they had, totaling around 400 at the time, into the back of a truck and drove nearly an entire day to the GPAA show in Pleasanton, California, in October 2016. They pulled in around 6 p.m. just as the show was getting ready to shut down for the day. But they got in, set up and had a great time the following day. "It's been a whirlwind since then," says Ken. "We've had outstanding support from the GPAA staff. Without that venue, I don't think we would've reached the level of success that we have, as quickly as we have." Both men agree that they look forward to a long-term

partnership with the GPAA and try to support the organization and community at every given opportunity.

"What drives us is helping people experience profound change in their lives," says Klint. This, from a man who never intended to make machines or pans. Klint just wanted to go mine. But his experience working with his father—plus his time spent mining in Alaska—inspired him to fix some of the big obstacles that stood between miners and gold, starting with the machines being used.

But there's another unique and important feature of Gold Claw that runs deeper than simplified gold extraction. When Ken came home from his tour in the service, he suffered from PTSD. Gold saved his life. "PTSD isn't just in your head, it's in your muscles," Ken explains. "Working the earth and trying to get to the gold clears the mind." Ken quickly realized that the therapeutic nature of panning for gold can and should be shared with other veterans suffering from PTSD. "Our mission at Gold Claw is to help people who have served our country and have returned and are now suffering. We want to introduce



them to gold and to the community in order to help them find that therapy and alleviate their pain.”

Both Klint and Ken are dedicated to exposing veterans to gold panning opportunities, and the Gold & Treasure Shows are a perfect vehicle for doing just that. According to Ken, veterans suffering from PTSD don’t understand why they have it or what triggers it, but it’s often paralyzing. “Your cognitive reasoning starts to escape and—even though you know it’s not normal behavior—you become reclusive, which generates more frustration and anger.”

“We can teach veterans with PTSD to use their muscles, since that’s where all the pent-up frustration is stored,” Ken says. “When you’re done, you feel calm and peace. It doesn’t matter how bad the week before was or what the upcoming week has in store. And that’s the most important thing for these guys.”

Furthermore, Gold Claw gives back to veterans and wounded warriors by donating \$1 per purple pan sold to the Purple Heart Foundation, which incorporates other various programs who match the donated funds in order to provide therapy, meals and housing to vets in need. “They don’t have the ability to do it themselves, and it’s our responsibility to help,” says Ken.

“I believe there’s plenty of gold for everybody, but not everybody can get to it.” -Klint Washburn

Gold Claw’s mission is to ultimately make gold accessible to everyone with flawlessly engineered technology. They want to make prospecting less intimidating to those who have never tried it or are simply inexperi-





enced. "Everyone has the right to gold. We want to make the magic of seeing gold efficiently available to everybody and bring more people into this community," explains Klint. But because Gold Claw's technology is so new and unfamiliar to lifelong prospectors, they initially saw some pushback from the community. But the GPAA has helped Klint and Ken to get out there and communicate with people, explaining how their devices work.

"You're fighting hundreds of years of folklore history passed down between generations of gold recovery techniques," says Klint. "A lot of people are skeptical of new technologies. Don't let that slow you down." Being able to showcase what makes Gold Claw's technology so special at the GPAA's Gold & Treasure Shows was essential to the success of their business.

Klint encourages other beginner prospectors and/or small-business owners to get involved with the GPAA. "Just get a booth," he insists. "Just be there, experience it." Getting to know the people at the GPAA, those individuals and organizations who have supported him and Ken the most, has been priceless. "Everyone's happy to help out," he says. But most

importantly, Klint recommends getting to know the other vendors.

The positive support Klint and Ken have received from the GPAA and the entire prospecting community has been overwhelming. "Come into it with really big, open eyes. Don't squint at other people's products," advises Klint. "The tendency is to want to bash anything that looks like it's competition. But our value/model is that if you have something good, it's good for somebody—and maybe not somebody else." Healthy competition is good and acknowledging how each and every product out there contributes is crucial for establishing a healthy business. "It's a community, it's not a headbutting competition," Klint laughs. "Everyone's got really good ideas. If there was no competition, no one would come up with anything new. We drive each other to be better tomorrow than we are today. The Gold & Treasure Shows give us the opportunity to do that."

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