

# California's gold rush

## 'Recreational miners' head out to the deserts and rivers

United Press International  
BONSALL, Calif. — The California gold rush is on once again. Skyrocketing gold prices have produced the "recreational miner" — a new breed of prospector that would baffle the burro-and-sourdough prospector of the Old West. With an ounce of gold now selling for more than \$650, the small, at one time almost worthless amounts of fine gold dust an amateur can pan out

of gravel, are now valuable. Residents of western states are joining the search by the thousands. Often, they are middle class families out to find enough gold in the deserts or mountain rivers to pay for a vacation or weekend camping trip. George Massie, president of the Gold Prospectors Association of America, said that two years ago the association consisted of about 40,000 members. But last month the mem-

bership jumped to 52,000, and it currently stands at 65,000, he said. "With the price of gold going up the way it is, everybody and his brother wants to get into recreational mining," Massie said. The association is made up of "mostly weekend people," said Dave Troesh, 33, a former drugstore manager who knew nothing about prospecting when he took it up as a hobby 18 months ago. The native Califor-

nian said he now lives on the gold he pans from the Stanislaus River near Sonoma. "I'm not making a great living," he said, "but I do well enough to get along." But he won't say how much is "well enough." The prospectors and miners are reluctant to talk about how much money they make. "Not if you're going to put my

name in the paper where the tax people can read it," said one. "You'll never get a straight answer on that one from anybody," answered another. Jerry Keene, head of Keene Engineering of Northridge, Calif., said, "Without mentioning names, I know of a guy in northern California who began working at it full time, and I hear he's getting about 10 ounces a day."

Keene, who claims his company is the largest maker and distributor of portable mining equipment in the world, added that at today's prices, that's more than \$6,000 a day. Whatever the prospectors and miners make, Keene and others in his business have found a bonanza supplying them with everything from maps and \$2 gold pans to \$4,000 power dredges. The best equipped amateur gold

seekers use the small power dredges to suck up river gravel for sifting. In California, they need a \$5 license from the state Department of Fish and Game. The department issued 5,208 permits in 1979, an increase of 1,450 from 1978. Keene said, "Our business is primarily recreational mining, and we've been running about \$2 million to \$3 million a year. Now I'm looking at \$1 million a month. "Business doubles by the month. I moved into a larger factory five years ago. Now I'm running two shifts a day, six days a week, and we'll be operating 24 hours a day later this month. W.G. Scotti of San Francisco Mining and Lapidary said he sold about two dozen small power dredges in January and is now back ordered up to eight weeks.

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## Fake nurse caught in El Paso

United Press International  
EL PASO, — A woman posing as a nurse has been making money by giving immunizations of stolen polio vaccine to school children, authorities say. An investigation began after the school nurse in Canutillo, a suburb west of El Paso, became suspicious when a student presented a vaccination record bearing a doctor's signature stamp instead of a real signature. "She contacted a health department nurse who contacted the head department nurse and they got the child's mother and found out she got the shots from this woman," Dr. Bernard Rosenbloom, director of the El Paso City-County Health Department, said Monday. "In checking into this, we found she'd worked at three or four medical places in El Paso and was discharged from each place. Allegedly after she left, they found things missing — immunizations, vaccines, this sort of thing. "She's been passing herself off as a nurse, and giving immunizations of the doctor said, The State Department of Health and State Board of Medical Examiners will determine whether to charge the woman with practicing medicine without a license, Rosenbloom added.

## Reagan low on money

United Press International  
LOS ANGELES — Ronald Reagan has only \$4 million of his \$18 million budget left for his drive for the Republican presidential nomination but his campaign treasurer feels it will be enough to cover the remaining primaries and the July convention. "We have to be cautious," treasurer Bay Buchanan said in an interview Monday. "But the budget has quite a bit of flexibility. We know that \$4 million is enough to cover the next four months and to cover the convention," she said. Reagan spent the day at three private fund raisers in Los Angeles before meeting with volunteers at his Inglewood headquarters. On Tuesday, he heads for Indiana and the start of a four-day, four-state campaign trip. Under the direction of ousted campaign manager John Sears, fired by Reagan the day of the New Hampshire primary, the campaign ate up by Feb. 26 more than two-thirds of the federal limit of about \$17.5 million allowed for primaries. New campaign manager William Casey then instituted a series of cost-saving steps. About 80 people left the campaign either because they weren't needed after the early primaries or they were fired. In other reductions, staffers making more than \$15,000 took a 50 percent cut in salary above that amount. There have been reductions in purchases of broadcast advertising and political mailings and telephone banks. "We're the strong frontrunner, so there is not the need to spend the money as if we're behind," said Buchanan. There also are fewer staffers traveling with Reagan and those who do now double up in hotel rooms. Buchanan estimated that staff reductions have saved about \$250,000 a month.

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