

Topaz Spirits

Newsletter Winter 2007 to 2008

Welcome to the Winter newsletter and a belated Happy New Year to you all! It's been quite a winter this year with the weather, the flu and the rush of the holidays. I hope that you're all finding rest and relaxation now and settling in.

There are a number of things I would like to talk about in this newsletter, beginning with the rationale for discontinuing the shipping discount on purchases over \$100. As a frame of reference, eBay charges a fee when you list an item and another fee (called a final value fee) when that item sells. No fee is charged for the shipping and handling (which is why many sellers build in outrageous handling fees ... that is where they keep their profits!). When I offered the shipping discount, that was my way of sharing profits with you as a special thanks.

Since I initiated the free shipping discount, two things have happened. Beginning February 20th of this year, eBay is once again changing their fees, lowering the list fees and raising the final value fees. Needless to say, the later far exceeds the former. Then, the wholesale prices of crystals has risen dramatically because of the weak dollar and I am finding prices from outside the US doubling. So it is costing substantially more to replace the crystals I sell, as well as well as obtain a wide variety of different crystals from

around the world. These things in combination have seriously affected my costs, and in an effort to keep the pricing as reasonable as possible and still enable me to buy new stock, I can no longer sustain the costs of the postage discount. I apologize to my customers as this has been such a nice thing for several years. As you all know, I do give a little crystal as a gift on each purchase and still intend to do that.

My next thing is kind of an interesting twist on crystals. A few months ago, I put a pair of Boji Stones® in the eBay store and got an email from a "concerned eBay citizen" that if I did not have a "birth certificate" saying that I had bought the stones from the trademark owner, I couldn't call them "Boji Stones". Well, that elicited a response from me. My day job is intellectual property, so I went on the US Patent and Trademark Office site and darned if it wasn't true ... Boji Stone is a registered trademark and I had not realized it. That's why I now call them Kansas Pop Rocks as I got my stones from the same place as the Boji Stones, but had not bought them from the trademark holder and therefore, I cannot use the trademark. In an effort to see what else is out there, I discovered that Melody has applied for a trademark on "Super Seven™" and the company Heaven and Earth, has registered trademarks for Sataloyka®

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and Azeztulite®. They have applications for about a dozen more (such as Nirvana Quartz™) that they show in their catalogs. I was appalled. What this means is that crystals are being branded like Bayer Aspirin® and Silly Putty®! People are claiming that crystals mined from the same mine are somehow more magical because they have a trademark ... and thus become higher priced. Years ago, JaneAnn Dow named the Russian Lemurians/Sacred Scribes. When asked if she wanted to trademark, she declined saying that they belonged all Healers, Light Workers and all of us who love the crystals and their energies. And for the record, there is *still no* trademark on either Russian Lemurian or Sacred Scribe, although there was an attempt to register both and the application was withdrawn. Yet there are individuals who claim that the only true Russian Lemurians come from a specific mine in Russian and *are* trademarked ... this is a complete falsehood.

As I said, I was appalled by the unscrupulous marketing out there. I'm with JaneAnn Dow ... these things belong to us all. Each individual crystal deserves to be honored and cherished for their energy no matter what the name is. I hate to say "buy generic" but, truly, that's what this means. Know what you're buying and buy what feels right ... don't just buy the name.

And this is Jan, stepping off her soap box and again wishing you a wonderful and successful 2008!

Jan