

Calgary Metal Detecting Club

THE BUZZER

Volume 51 – issue 4 JULY 2022



**YAHOOOO! HAPPY STAMPEDE FROM THE CMDC -
Celebrating 50 years!**

The Buzzer is published by and for the membership of the CMDC –
Canada's oldest Active Metal Detecting Club.

Visit us on the internet @ www.cmdc.org.

Calgary – Stampede Season

The city of Calgary has long been associated with Western Culture. We have hosted the biggest outdoor show on earth, the Calgary Stampede, for over 100 years. A lot of Calgarians are proud of our city's western heritage. Newcomers to Alberta (or even to Canada) will join in and get into the Western Spirit during the Stampede. Look around in early July, and you will see a lot of people dress Western for that very special time in June and July dedicated to Calgary's early western roots, as symbolized by the Calgary Stampede.



As Calgary is Stampede city – there were even a few “Calgary Stampede Souvenir dollars” that were minted over the years. Some have been recovered by club members – including this group of 6 “Stampede dollars” found as a pocket spill by CMDC member Romeo Lalonde in 2004. Other Stampede coins and tokens have also shown up over the years.

With the long and proud cowboy history of Calgary, we should not be surprised when a bit of Western memorabilia comes under our coil. Western wear accessories are always a great find. I was personally thrilled when the front piece of a bolo tie was recovered at a club hunt a few years back and have dug up some western concho decorations. Keith Hoffart and Tracey Neal found wonderful examples of cowboy-design belt-buckles in the 2020 metal detecting season. There have been assorted other western-wear accessory finds recovered by members of the CMDC. They are always a cool item to find.

Of course, cowboy items don't just come out for Stampede. We are all excited when 1950s or 1960s cap guns or sheriff's star badges show up under our coil. The early 1960s was the era of Roy Rogers, Hopalong Cassidy and Gunsmoke. Several members have found advertising items related to those shows. Last year Ken Kittlitz dug up a cowboy lead figure, and Andy Coward recovered a tin horse and rider toy (broken) estimated to be from the 1930s. Many children had western play items as the top of their Christmas wish list, as the fascination with Western movies and radio shows from the 1920s and 1930s turned into Western based series on TV. All the examples below are mid-century toy guns that were recovered by CMDC members.



Some of that western heritage that we recover is real, and comes from the settlement of Calgary, with ranching and homesteading an important part of the local economy. We are all excited when a “real” piece of cowboy paraphernalia is recovered. It is always great to find a relic from Alberta's past. I still remember Fred Van Vaal's excitement when showing off the spur he found that had been repaired, using a Canadian large cent used as the rowell. CMDC members have dug up wagon tack, harness bells, bridle rosettes, wagon licences, horseshoes, and other relics and bits of history from Alberta's past.

So round up your detector and head off to hunt the site after your local pancake breakfast is finished. Wishing you all lots of cowboy treasures, and a rip-roaring Stampede Season! Yahooo!

Metal Detecting River Rescue

Allan Konesh – 2021 Buzzer Contest Entry

Allen Konesh is one of our Edmonton Metal Detecting Club cohorts. For the 2021 Buzzer Contest, Allen sent in this story about helping out some capsized boaters during the Fall of 2021.

My contest story is from a detecting excursion in Edmonton on October 09, 2021. It was an eventful and interesting day on the shores of the North Saskatchewan River with fellow detectorist Troy. We found a few items, and helped to assist a couple in distress that were clinging to a capsized canoe in the river.

While detecting on the riverbanks, we noticed a capsized canoe in the middle of the river with a middle-aged couple (no lifejackets) clinging to the sides of the canoe. Their belongings were scattered throughout the water.

Luckily Trent had his cell phone with him to call 911, as the woman was in obvious distress and was yelling for help in the water. The 911 operator pinged our location and notified a fire/rescue boat for the rescue. We were in constant communication with 911 and the rescue boat. We followed the capsized canoe along the riverbank, assuring the couple that a rescue boat was on its way.

The rescue boat showed up within 15 minutes and, thank God, both people and their belongings were pulled from the river. They were cold, but OK.



Coin Rings

There is a rich history surrounding coin rings – many of the rings were the product of difficult economic times. During the Depression, people who couldn't afford jewellery often used this method to make wedding bands. The coin rings were also a common trench art from World War I and II soldiers. Some were intended for their own use, while others were lovingly created for loved ones at home. There are stories of coin rings made on troop transport ships sailing across the oceans, and others were made on land by soldiers on the battlefield. I have seen examples from every country – made by both sides of the battle and using many different coin types.

These rings are also called “spoon rings” or “tap rings”, as soldiers used the materials at hand to make them. Most of the rings were “tapped out” by hammering lightly with their spoon or knife pommel evenly all around the edge of the coin until coin started to flatten and widen. Eventually the coins would have a wide band, like a ring- and then the center was cut out, and the interior was “tapped”. The rings were also called “10,000 tap rings”, as that is approximately how many taps were required to make a coin ring. Coin rings can be plain, or they can be very complicated. Some had intricate designs etched on, much like a love token.

Andy Coward of the CMDC is an expert on coin rings and can tell you how much work goes into making these creations. He has made his coin ring creations into beautiful artisan pieces. Andy is also a club sponsor – see the ad for his business “COINS2RINGS” on the last page of the Buzzer. The pictures below are just a few of the examples of the rings and other jewellery that Andy Coward has hand-crafted from coins.



Detecting in the Heat of Summer

Calgary has an interesting climate, One of the issues that we face is how dry we are in comparison to other areas – and we seem to get extra dry in late summer. If you are not careful about how you dig a target in August and September, you can accidentally damage the sod in the park, and possibly create bad feelings towards detecting as a whole. So in early summer I want to leave everybody a reminder that in the heat of summer a lot of damage can be caused by improper digging – it is worse some years than others. Last year was super hot, so the damage may have been more evident than others.



In the summer season you will start to hear other detectorists make comments about “needing to learn how to dig a hinged (or horseshoe) plug.” The hinged plug will not dry out the same way a circular plug will. There are a lot of you-tube videos showing people digging circular plugs, but most of those people live in areas that are not as “dry” as Calgary. There are two problems with this type of plug. The first is that a lawn mower will suck the plug out of the hole in a heartbeat. The second is that the grass on the plug is denied nourishment from the interlocking root system.

Most of these issues are caused by lack of knowledge of the climate in Calgary and other areas of Alberta. It is easy to watch a video done at sea level in a humid area, and not realize how much ground moisture is sapped away by the general aridity of our area. Think about it - Hang a damp towel out in Vancouver, and the next morning you have a damp towel. In Calgary you can hang a sopping wet towel up and have that same towel dry in an hour.

In Calgary, when the root system of a plug is separated from the water table, the summer heat and arid air saps whatever moisture is there away from the root system, and the grass will die – as in shown in this picture of a plug that I discovered detecting a park after somebody had already been there. I know we all hate to see dead-grass discs in parks.

If you want to learn how to dig a hinged plug, there was an article in last month’s “Buzzer” – but CMDC member Clayton Blancher also made instructional videos on digging plugs and on probing that he placed on the Facebook group site. They are very well done, and easy to follow.

When it is really hot, it is best to avoid parks where the grass is mowed regularly (short) and stick to less developed parks. It is easy to find a park where the grass isn’t mowed at all, or areas that are well shaded by tall trees (which helps). Natural prairie areas are another option, but they are harder to swing the coil through. We find that park areas with longer grass hold the moisture better. That may be an issue – although longer grass holds the moisture better, it also is more likely to have swarms of mosquitos waiting for dinner.

Remember to take care of yourself the same way we want you to care for the park areas. In the heat of summer make sure that you are carrying water, and stay hydrated. Bring a cellphone in case of emergencies, and in isolated hunt-areas – inform someone where you plan to detect. Remember to bring bug spray. Summer is one of the best times for metal detecting, especially as the long summer evenings allowing us to keep detecting late at night. Hoping you all find “Cool Finds” on those hotter days and longer nights.



Help Needed - CMDC Executive

We have some positions that will be opening up on the Calgary Metal Detecting Club Executive. A few people on the CMDC executive have expressed a desire to move on from their roles. Judy Taylor has been club treasurer and Susan Durksen has been club secretary. Both ladies have been in their current roles for over five years. They would like to give some other people in the Calgary Metal Detecting Club the opportunity to lend a hand, and to help the club expand and improve..

None of the executive roles takes a significant amount of time, and we hope that some of the other members will volunteer to help out. If you would like to assist the club with either of these roles on the CMDC executive, it would help us out a lot. If you decide that you might be interested, please reach out to a current board member, or send an email to the CMDC website to express your interest.

As we are entering summer, we are seeing a lot of things opening up. We hope that applies to our meeting location at the Brentwood Co-op. It would be great to be able to get together for meetings again. I'm looking forward to increased meetings, club-hunts, and other fun activities. Let's work together to make the CMDC Jubilee year of 2022 a fabulous metal detecting season, and to make the CMDC the best club we can. Thank you all for your continued support of this great club.



Metal Detecting - Leave No Trace

One thing that will always be important in metal detecting is the ideal of "Leaving no Trace." When we are finished detecting and recovering targets in a park or other area, we should be able to look back over the field and not see any evidence of "where" we dug out our finds. This is not only good for the environment, but it also helps to maintain the good reputation of our Metal Detecting hobby.

Of course, a big part of this is making sure that our plugs are properly dug, and that our holes are filled in. Nothing will ruin people's perception of our hobby than walking through a park a few days after they observed a detectorist, and noticing visible holes, trash on the ground, and rings of dead grass. It comes down to practice and knowledge. When I started in the hobby, my holes were huge. As I learned the hobby and observed others, I learned how to retrieve targets with less damage. I stopped digging round circle plugs, and started using hinged (also called horseshoe or "U") plugs. My ability to pinpoint a target improved, and my plugs became much smaller. Most members of the CMDC are happy to take a bit of time and teach digging techniques to someone starting out in the hobby.

Speaking of leaving no trace, that should include your trash. You are going to find targets - lots of them. Some of them will be "treasure" or "keepers", but you will also find a lot of trash. We live in a society with a lot of disposable items, and people don't always take the time to put things in the local garbage bin. You will find plenty of bottle caps, pull-tabs, tinfoil, and other trash. I always carry it with me to the nearest garbage. I have gone into parks with my detector and found half-filled plugs with the "recovered trash" sitting right beside the hole, and a garbage can less than 20 meters away. If you dug it, you own it until you can find the nearest trash barrel. I use a finds pouch with a designated trash area for that reason. I am not saying that you should pick up every piece of trash you see lying on the ground - just use a bit of common sense. If you came back next year, you would not want to dig that item again.

It's easy to leave people with a good impression of our hobby, especially as we practice and become more skillful. It's like golf, fishing, or any other hobby - you will never get any better without practicing and learning from others. Then someday you will look back at the end of a hunt through a park, and know that no-one will know just where you dug that gold ring sitting in your pouch.

WEDDING Ring Return – to Relative

I saw this story on one of the metal detecting forums, and thought it was great to be able to surprise yourself and a relative by returning something so precious. "Coinboy" published this short story on the "Friendly Metal Detecting Forum" in July of 2020.

I returned a wedding ring to my uncle! I was detecting a local park when I got a solid 55 at 4 inches with the simplex. When I dug it out I saw a big fat ring in the hole! My uncle was visiting our house and when I showed him the ring he immediately took it and said, "is this tungsten?" "Yes", I replied confused.

He said "I lost this 2 years ago on my last visit to your house! I was in the park and when I got home it wasn't on my finger!" I was stunned and I happily offered it to him. He thanked me a million times and almost cried. It feels really good to make someone's day especially your uncle!

Fishscale Facts

Up until 1921 the 5-cent piece was about half the size and half the thickness of a dime. This makes it one of the hardest coins to find with a metal detector, and also makes it a much sought after coin on many a detectorist's wish list. They are also a high-content silver coin, with 92.5 percent silver in the coin. Canadians who used the coins thought the silver 5-cent pieces resembled the scales of a fish because of their tiny size and gleaming silver appearance. That is how the 5-cent piece got the nickname, "fishscale".

In 1921 the 5-cent piece was changed to the current size and made of nickel (hence the name). That year both sizes of the 5-cent piece were released by the mint, but most of them were the larger size "nickels". The number of the fishscale silver 5-cent pieces released in 1921 was small, and they are very rare. Three Members of the Calgary Metal Detecting Club have recovered 1921 fishscale nickels over the 50 years the club has been active. Each was worth over \$4,000.00 dollars.



SUMMER BEACH METAL DETECTING FAIL!

That Awkward Moment in Metal Detecting

Allyson Cohen (Detecting Diva) – found on detectingdiva.com (Jan 2014)

Detecting Diva, Allyson Cohen, writes a great blog with a decade of stories and articles about her detecting adventures. This article was a funny one, because I have experienced a few of these awkward moments myself. I went hunting with Ilona recently, and brought my shovel and gear but forgot my detector, and had to borrow her spare. 😊

*That awkward moment when you're trying to explain to a non-detectorist why you detect.

*That awkward moment when you're showing the awesome stuff you just found to your buddy, and you realize they got skunked.

*That awkward moment when your hunting partner realizes he or she should have bought a better machine.

*That awkward moment when you score a great find while going over the same area your detecting buddy was just searching.

*That awkward moment when you're ready to hit the woods, your buddy forgot his insect repellent & you realize yours is almost gone.

*That awkward moment when you have to remind someone to fill in their holes.

*That awkward moment when someone asks if you've got any extra batteries; your display indicates yours are almost out, and you have to decide whether or not to give them your extras.

*That awkward moment when someone contributes your good finds to luck, not skill.

*That awkward moment when you are asked where you found something, and you don't want to tell.

*That awkward moment when a friend thinks they've found a piece of gold jewelry. You know it's not gold, but you don't want to ruin their high.

*That awkward moment when you arrive at a site (after a long drive of course), and realize you've forgotten your shovel.

*That awkward moment when a passerby asks "Does that thing really work?"

*That awkward moment when you realize you are actually relating to some of these awkward moments

Monty Jim Meddick



BLASTs FROM THE PAST – 50 years of Detecting with the CMDC

Three Fishscale Day – November 2011

In early November of 2011, I went out detecting to a park that I have hunted before and ended up with an insane result. My first find was a 1902 dime, and then a 1900 dime - followed by two more dimes (1953 and 1943). I was very excited, but nothing got me prepared for what was to follow....

MY FIRST FISHSCALE 5-CENT PIECE! YEAH! “One more off my list!” I said. 😊 I went a few more steps, and I pulled out my second 5-cent piece in a matter of minutes. O.M.G. 😱 It's crazy enough to find one, never mind finding TWO fishscale 5-cent pieces in a day... The first was a 1919, followed by a 1916.

“What an insane day!” I said. “I never hoped to find one 5-cent piece. Who's gonna believe me that I found two in one day???” So, I am at silver #6 for the day, and crazy with excitement...when...I found

THE THIRD 5-CENT PIECE, ALL JUST MINUTES APART! 😊



I was in disbelief, and I am still trying to remember my numbers on the e-trac. What a day.... I not only took one more coin off my wish-list, but times 3 in the same day. The next one my list is dollar. Hey dollar, here I come! Be ready to see the light.

Buzzer Article by Alex Mioc – Jan 2012



Club Meeting – November 2003

This was our first meeting in the new location – Congrats to Dave Foster and Phil Underwood for finding us the location below the Brentwood Co-op store just off Crowchild Trail.

Considering the cold snap that has befallen the Calgary area, it was a pretty good turn out for November, with 13 club members in attendance. There may have been stragglers at the old meeting place wondering why no one was answering the door. It was a quick first-half of the meeting, and Dale Downing brought chocolate brownies for treats. There was no coffee available – but that will be arranged for our next meeting in the new location.

It was an “All Romeo” Finds of the month. Romeo Lalonde really cleaned up, taking all four categories. The half-and-half was won by our youngest member, Sam Niefer, and Phil Underwood won a draw for an “Early history of the NWMP” book.

The club will be having a Christmas Dinner at the Kensington Legion on Friday December 5th, 2003. The cost will be \$12.50 per person or \$25.00 per couple. The club is contributing of the cost of the meal, and wine for every table.

JEWELLERY METAL STAMPS

When we find a piece of jewellery that has a hallmark it is pretty exciting. TREASURE!!! The next question is almost always 'What does this mark mean?' The most common Marks or Stamps are used to identify things like Metal type, Carat Weight, and sometimes Country of origin or designer. .

The mark that gives you the most information is the Metal Stamp, or Karat Weight of the Metal. If you look you'll usually see the Karat Stamp. 10k, 14k, 18k or 24K are the most common markings in North America. They usually indicate percentage of gold, but you will also run across marks for Titanium, Stainless Steel, Tungsten, Sterling Silver, or Platinum.

The stamp will be in a different place dependant on the type of item found. In rings and bracelets the mark will be found on the shank (in the side of the item closest to the skin), with chains the mark is most often found on the clasp, brooches or pins on the back, and earrings often on the hook or stud. Pendants or charms will usually have a mark on the back, or on the clasp. The K on gold rings stands for Karat Weight, which is the system used to describe the percentage of pure gold an item contains. The higher the karat number, the higher the percentage of gold in your jewelry.

- 24K gold is pure gold.
- 18K gold contains 18 parts gold and 6 parts of one or more additional metals, making it 75% gold.
- 14K gold contains 14 parts gold and 10 parts of one or more additional metals, making it 58.3% gold.
- 12K gold contains 12 parts gold and 12 parts of one or more additional metals, making it 50% gold.
- 10K gold contains 10 parts gold and 14 parts of one or more additional metals, making it 41.7% gold. 10K gold is the minimum karat that can be called "gold" in the United States.
- 9K gold contains 9 parts gold and 15 parts of one or more additional metals. 9K is the minimum karat that can be called "gold" in Canada, the United Kingdom and parts of Asia.

Detectorists can find gold from a variety of different countries, which can be confusing, as Europeans use a different method of measuring gold quantity. That jewellery will be marked with numbers that indicate their percentage of gold, such as:

- 24K gold marked 999 to indicate 100% gold
- 21K gold marked 875 to indicate 87.5% gold
- 18K gold marked 750 to indicate 75% gold
- 14K gold marked 585 for 58.5% gold
- 10K gold marked 417 for 41.7% gold
- 9K gold marked 375 for 37.5% gold

Other markings that you might on a gold ring or other piece of gold jewellery could be GE or GP for Gold electroplated, GF for Gold filled (Usually has a fraction i.e. 1/20 10K GF), GS = Gold Shell, and GHE for Heavy Gold Electroplate. In order to be marked GF, at least 1/20th of the weight of an object must be gold.

Other metal stamps found on precious jewellery could include TUNGS for Tungsten, S.S. or St. Steel for Stainless Steel, or PD for Palladium. Common marks for Silver and Platinum are below:

SILVER

925 (92.5% silver) = Sterling. 835 - A lower quality of Silver (83.5%) - Common in Europe.

950 (95% silver) - fairly rare. STERLING or STER for Sterling Silver.

TAXCO or MEXICO for Mexican Silver

COIN for Coin Silver (80% silver) or .999 FINE = Pure Silver

PLATINUM

PT (ATOMIC SYMBOL))

IRID. PLAT..

PT 900

RESEARCH – ACTION - RESULT

In metal detecting you will often hear that the key to a good find is “RESEARCH” – Many think that is using maps and photos to discover the location of an old building. but that is only part of it. It is easy to learn about a “Place” in history – the next part of research is to learn about the people in that place before you make the decision that that is where you want to hunt. Figure out parts, and you are on your way to some great finds.

Research is the act of gathering knowledge. The point of research in metal detecting is to acquire an understanding the area or specific site that you think might be worth hunting. Your goal is to learn the location of promising sites by studying not only the “location”, but also the “history” of that location. Understanding where buildings were is only one part of what you need to know. In order to gain insight into the best places to look for treasures, you also need to try to learn about the culture or the community of the people who lived there. This is where old newspapers, oral history, and books about the community help out. It will help to know what type of people who lived in that area – the culture of an area can be just as important as where the buildings stood.

For example – if your hunt-site was a wild and woolly mining or lumber town that was only in existence a few years – there aren’t going to be many home-sites or lost luxury items. The culture of the town leads more to locating recreational locations like saloons or “red-light” zones. However, if it was a growing town with churches, schools and community market areas – the different culture gives you different areas to hunt. Was the area considered “worker” or “professional”? Was the area neighbourly – did they have outdoor meeting places or were they more private and elitist? All are things to consider when thinking about a possible hunt site

Old newspapers will often give you a feel for the community – small town papers will publish articles about the location of the local community market, or where people would gather for a picnic lunch after church. They also might mention where special events were held, like outdoor band performances, or local fairs. Many town newspapers are available through Peels Prairie Provinces, a digitization project run by the University of Alberta Libraries. As always, when we discover something about a privately owned location – you need to get land-owner’s permission to hunt.

Another thing to look at is what the community is like now. It may seem odd, but sometimes things don’t change much over the years. There is one park in Calgary that I have seen aerial photos over 60 years, with the same path across the park in exactly the same place. People will always sit in the shade of trees, and will usually walk on an established path than bushwhack, and some landmarks will not change.

Looking at old photos of an area will sometimes give you valuable clues. Sometimes you need to consider the background of a photo. Is the treeline or hedge in about the same area? Chances are that the dirt under that hedge has not been detected. Is there another building in the background that isn’t there anymore – that is another good clue.

Local town directories may be available through the library. Henderson Directories were one of many community directories used across the prairies, and in use until the middle of the last century. In some of the early directories, they not only listed names and addresses, but also listed the occupation of the homeowner. This can be important in research as well. Will you be more likely to find lost coins at a residence that once housed a doctor, on that of a night watchman. These are two of the occupations I noted in my recent perusal of the 1910 Calgary Henderson’s directory. I have used the book for Lethbridge and Calgary. They used to publish every year, but limited years are available online through Peels Prairie Provinces.

When you have done the research and discovered your potential hunt-site – then the job is almost done. Get permission, and consider the layout of your area. Look for where people would have congregated. Remember that 60 years ago kids were outside all day, playing. Many families spent their summer evenings out of doors until the house cooled down. The clothing line and out-house path are always good places to search.

As you continue to develop in your metal detecting hobby, a lot of this research becomes “practical”. When you drive through an older area you will notice the houses and say to yourself “1930s style” - maybe I should look into this area. A bit of research and a potential hunt-site can lead to a world of treasure.

Family Heirloom returned by Aussie Detectorist

Marc Richardson enjoys the hobby of metal detecting. He was out with his family in a park in Noosaville, Australia in 2019 celebrating a birthday picnic. For fun, he got out his metal detector and buried change in the sand around the children's play area for them to find.

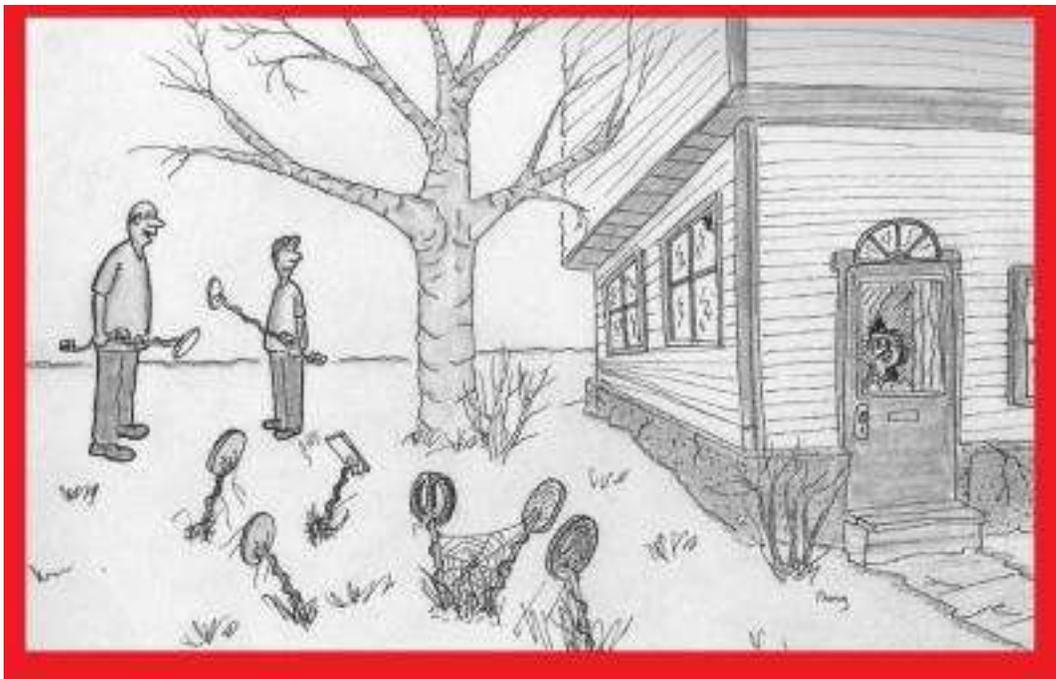
When the children were finished with their hunt, Marc decided to take his turn, and went out for a quick detecting jaunt around the park. He thought he might find a couple of dollars, and maybe a bit of bling. Marc Richardson ended up finding a gold pendant of a horse with Latin inscribed underneath. A bit of computer research, and Marc realized that the pendant held an a fairly uncommon family name, and the lattin motto "A sound and vigorous mind is the highest possession".

Marc Richardson researched the name and discovered that there was only one family with that name in the local area – and that family lived only 100m away the park where he found the pendant. He decided to take a chance and drive over to the Blayney home.

Jim and Tracy Blayney lost the pendant in the park during family photos ten years earlier. The pendant was a family heirloom that was made out of a set of cufflinks that Jim inherited from his grandfather. The family was horrified when they noticed the broken chain after the photoshoot. The Blayneys spent hours searching the park for the missing pendant, including renting a metal detector, with no luck. "It was really precious to us," Jim Blayney said. "We were devastated."

The Blayneys could hardly believe it when Marc Richardson knocked on their door ten years later to return the lost treasure. They looked back at photos taken 10 years earlier and noticed that one was in the exact spot that the pendant was found, with the broken chain visible around their daughter's neck. Jim and Tracy were elated to have their missing heirloom back, and praised Marc for going to the extra mile, and making all that effort to seek them out. They planned on purchasing a much stronger chain this time out.

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"Oh, Camon Frank, you're nobody until you've hunted the house of quicksand!"

## LOCATION AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Although in person meetings are cancelled until further notice because of Covid 19, the Calgary Metal Detecting club will be holding ZOOM meetings the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm. The address of the ZOOM meeting will be emailed out to paid members of the club shortly before the meeting. We will restart "In-Person" Metal Detecting Club monthly meetings after the Covid 19 crisis is over.

### PLEASE SUPPORT OUR SPONSORS

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