

Getting Into Metal Detecting as a Hobby

By Mark Branton
ThumbPrint News Guest Writer

Michigan Treasure Hunters is a club devoted to metal detecting with about 140 families as members. As President of the club, my goal is to get the novice acquainted with metal detecting as a hobby, give advice as to the appropriate equipment needed to begin and to acquaint them with the treasure hunters' code of ethics.

Most beginning treasure hunters dream big. They think, "Maybe, I will find that \$20 gold piece or the elusive 1916 D Mercury dime, or a lost cache of jewelry." Well, most likely that will not happen. I have been detecting for 30 years and I still have to keep my day job! Last year I netted 9,400 coins, thirty of which were silver.

When getting started, researching metal detectors should be your number one priority. Not all metal detectors are the same. There are so many manufacturers out there and most of them have their own website. While comparing prices, models and manufacturers, keep one thing in mind – the price. As a novice, I would not recommend the least expensive machine nor the most expensive. The least expensive models usually have a depth of only one to two inches, and that would surely get a person discouraged right away. Then there are the high-end detectors with all of the special gadgetry, which can be complicated to learn. My rule of thumb is to get acquainted with a mid-range detector and then move up from there. I myself use a Tesoro Silver uMax. It weighs 2 lbs. 2 oz. and it runs on one 9-volt battery. It has a depth of six to eight inches. Since I have tennis elbow, a lightweight machine suits me just fine, and I even

recommend a mid-range detector to all novices because the learning curve is very simple.

One source of information on metal detecting is YouTube with instructional videos and pointers from metal detecting hobbyists and pros. Our club, Michigan Treasure Hunters, and our sister club, Great Lakes Metal Detecting, both have their own websites which have a wealth of information for beginners. These websites are www.michigantreasurehunters.com and www.greatlakesmetaldetecting.com.



The Tesoro Silver uMax is a mid-range detector recommended for beginners.

If you don't have a computer, there are two publications that give great advice for beginning metal detector hobbyists: *Lost Treasure* and *Western and Eastern Treasures*. These magazines have testimonials, stories and instructions from individuals in the field.

Other equipment that a beginner should consider, in addition to the basic metal detector are a nail pouch to put trash in, knee pads, gloves, a digger, such as the quality ones made by Lesch, and a whistle (in case one gets lost).

It is important that wherever a person metal detects that a "Code of Ethics" is followed. The objective is to make the ground look as if no one had disturbed it. There are basically three rules:

- Fill all of your holes.
- Pick up all of your trash.
- Observe all school and park rules.

Be sure to check with local or state regulations when metal detecting in parks. Only about four state parks in the state of Michigan allow metal detecting and these only have limited sparse areas in which to hunt. A lot of local parks and county parks charge

a fee to detect, which is usually anywhere between \$5 and \$10. If you get caught without a permit, your equipment – even your vehicle – could be confiscated. It is always best to check with the park authorities.

For me, metal detecting is a very enjoyable hobby. It is such a thrill to see that gold ring or silver coin come out of the ground. I also enjoy returning jewelry if it has an inscription. I like to see that person's face light up after receiving back their lost property.

Our motto with the Michigan Treasure Hunters is: "We leave it

cleaner than we found it." Get out there, have fun, obey the "Code of Ethics" and best of luck in all of your treasure hunting pursuits! 🍀

Editor's Note: Michigan Treasure Hunters meets the 4th Tuesday of each month, February through November, in the gymnasium at the rear of Faith Lutheran Church in Livonia. The church is located on the north side of 5 Mile Road between Merriman and Middlebelt. The club welcomes interested persons from the Thumb Area to join them at their next meeting.

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