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## Club hunts for hidden treasures

*By Linda Ann Chomin*  
*O&E STAFF WRITER*

It was a beautiful day for treasure hunting a week ago Thursday in Rotary Park in Livonia. More than a dozen people of all ages scurried around with metal detectors in search of coins and tokens at the event staged by Michigan Treasure Hunters.

The club usually attracts around 100 members to its monthly meeting at Faith Lutheran Church in Livonia. The next meeting should draw an even larger crowd with the group's annual open house Tuesday, April 28. The fun starts at 7:30 p.m.

Members vie to win awards for the best finds at every meeting including the upcoming open house.

"It's a family-oriented club with activities throughout the year including an annual fall hunt in Milan," said Dave Picard, chairman of the board and a Livonia resident. "The April meeting is a big meeting when members display their finds throughout the year. The winners of different categories are broken down into jewelry, coins, tokens and relics. Last year, one woman found a \$33,000 diamond ring. I was a relic winner for finding a 10,000-year-old fossil. You might find a Roy Rogers cap gun, old metal toys and trucks. It's basically a fun thing."

When Al Temple founded the club 36 years ago, only 11 treasure hunters showed up at the first meeting. Today, the club has 120-130 members. Metal detectors can be as inexpensive as \$100, making the hobby affordable. Members also sell reasonably priced used equipment at meetings.

"I thought, wouldn't it be nice to find things and talk with other people about how much fun it was," said Temple, 80. "We put on a display at Livonia Mall and as a result had 63 people at the next meeting."

In recent years, many of the members learned about the club from the Web site, [www.michigantreasurehunters.com](http://www.michigantreasurehunters.com).

Joanne Rundell joined 18 years ago. Members are still talking about her finding an 18K and platinum butterfly brooch valued at \$5,000.

"I thought it was junk but brushed off the dirt and uncovered 61 diamonds plus rubies and emeralds," said Rundell. "It's thought to be probably from 1834."

The club brings in authorities monthly to educate members about their finds. Some specialize in collecting certain items.

"We just had an authority on the Civil War," said Picard. "We've had Detroit Police Dive and Rescue ... an authority on dog licenses."

## PART OF HISTORY

Voice after voice chimes in about the fun and history involved with the hobby.

"We've made a lot of people into historians," said Sherry Klisz of Livonia, who shares her love of detecting with husband Tom. "The meetings are interesting. You would not believe what comes out of there."

Mark Branton holds up a cast iron soldier from World War II.

"The kids used to play with these," said Branton. "When you find something and don't know what it is you Google it. We find bullets, buckles. When we find beer cans, pull tabs we take those away."

The club's motto is to leave the area cleaner than when they found it. Except for a few areas of disturbed sod, park visitors would never guess a seeded hunt had occurred.

"We have token hunts once a month when we plant silver coins and tokens in the ground," said Picard.

"You can go into most state parks but we don't detect in cemeteries or hallowed ground," said Sherry Klisz. "We have certain standards." "A lot of good service comes out of this too," added Tom Klisz. "If someone loses something, they contact us. It's a service we do."

## GOOD WORKS

The nonprofit club is "big on community service." At Christmas, they purchase Toys for Tots and in September hold a hunt to raise money for the National Kidney Foundation. One of their members died from kidney disease. All of the merchandise is donated.

Kayla Branton, Mark's 14-year-old daughter, joined a couple of years ago. She is a student at Stevenson High School and is busy with the track team but still found time to come to the Thursday hunt.

"At first I had to come because I didn't have a baby sitter but then I got into it," said Kayla Branton of Livonia. "There's a bunch of people you know and share a hobby."

"We even have a legally blind member that regularly goes on hunts outdoors with us," said Picard. "It's fun. It's like Christmas."

This was the first hunt for Alex Ferguson, 14, a Stevenson student.

"I thought it would be fun being able to find things no one else can find," said Ferguson.

John Parker, 13, regularly attends the hunts with uncle Dwayne Seyuin of Redford.

"I wanted to show him there's other sports out there, different types of hunting, and it's good exercise," said Seyuin. "I think we make a difference. We go on playgrounds and find nails and things that kids cut themselves on. We're doing a good service to keep kids safe."

Michigan Treasure Hunters meet 7:30 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month at Faith Lutheran Church, 30000 Five Mile, Livonia. To contact the club, write Michigan Treasure Hunters, P.O. Box 510237, Livonia, MI 48151-6237.

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Find enough quarters and dimes and you've paid for the treasure hunting equipment. Metal detectors cost between \$100 and \$1,000.



The Michigan Treasure Hunters club gathers at Rotary Park in Livonia a week ago Thursday for a seeded hunt.



David Jaeger searches a field for tokens and coins during a Michigan Treasure Hunters event in Rotary Park in Livonia. (photos by Bill Bresler | staff photographer)



Joanne Rundell searches for treasure. Behind her, Lynn Walker digs after hearing a signal or beep through her headphones. (Bill Bresler | staff photographer)



Tom Klisz is careful to fill in the hole after digging up a find in Rotary Park in Livonia. (Bill Bresler | staff photographer)

