



# KA-DO-HA TREASURE FEST

Want to attend a huge seeded hunt and have a lot of fun doing it? Maybe you should come to Ka-Do-Ha.

*By John Freeland*

*Photos by Tonya Freeland*





## HUNT FOR ARROWHEADS 1/4 MILE



*Children's detecting area is seeded with lots of treasures. At left, it's easy to find the Ka-Do-Ha Indian Museum and Indian Village: just follow the signs. The site is open to year-round arrowhead hunting and metal detecting.*

**T**he Ka-Do-Ha Treasure Fest in Murfreesboro, Arkansas is one of the largest, most fun-filled detecting events in the United States. The festival is where friends reacquaint, children have a blast, and new friendships are made. Did I mention that thousands of dollars in gold coins, Native American artifacts, gold and silver jewelry, and countless U.S. silver dollars are found by treasure seekers at this event? There are loads of prizes, which come in many different shapes and forms. What made Treasure Fest Six such an exciting metal detecting event at Ka-Do-Ha's Indian Village? Journey with me to learn more.

Treasure Fest is fun for the whole family and brings metal detecting hobbyists from all over the States. Some drove from as far south as Florida, while others flew by plane from the Last Frontier state. Kicking off the event was Friday's "Meet and Greet," where one not only learned about the events to take place during the weekend, but enabled people to talk with friends they hadn't seen since last year's festival. Meeting other detectorists and developing new friendships also make this a special event. On Friday evening, karaoke singers proved their voices were worthy to the crowd. *American Digger*® magazine's founder and publisher, Butch Holcombe, stood up to the daunting challenge, and there was talk among the crowd that he may have missed his true calling. George Strait, eat your heart out! Are there any other hidden talents we don't know about Butch?

If watching Butch sing and dance wasn't enough entertainment and worth the price of admission, how about watching the kids play in the bouncy house? The children's play area was a big hit for the little ones, providing them with hours of entertainment. It also helped them eliminate some of that bottled, pent-up energy because many families drove long distances to attend

this epic treasure-seeking event.

The young'uns had a great time at the bouncy house and at a large arena seeded with all types of treasures. They enjoyed seeking out those hidden riches and stuffing them in their pockets. Additionally, the soft ground provided them with easy digging for their newly awaited and much-anticipated prizes. When they weren't detecting, they played in the dirt, looking for rocks of all types. Who knows, there could have been a diamond

in the midst since Ka-Do-Ha's Indian Village is so close to Arkansas's Crater of Diamonds State Park. Many kids were dirt-covered; parents just shrugged it off because it entertained them. So both children and adults had a great time. Treasure hunting is so much fun and has a way of turning adults into big kids, too. There were plenty of them whooping and hollering all weekend long. Many could hear one gal's excitement across several acres of land because she had just found one of the coveted \$1,000 prize tokens.

The thrill of the hunt, along with hours of fun, is what brings many detectorists to the Treasure Fest every

year. Many enthusiasts have been attending this epic event since its debut and have no plans to miss one. This event is so impressive because over 2,000 tokens are buried on over 100 acres of parcel. The treasure hunt began in the morning on one of the two designated fields each day. Not only did the Ka-Do-Ha Indian Village staff bury tokens, but they also concealed a lot of old U.S. and foreign coins, Civil War bullets, antique buttons, and other items.

Additionally, ten tokens were seeded in the ground, and the



*Publisher Butch Holcombe, singing his heart out.*





Among the numerous prizes were several display cases of old U.S. silver dollars and Native American artifacts. The prize tent is shown on page 46.

lucky ones exchanged them for \$1,000 cash prizes. Also, there were 20 tokens at \$100 each and thousands of dollars in gold and silver jewelry. Other prizes were vintage U.S. silver dollars and many other coins dating back to the 1800s, including old hammered coins as far back as the 16th century. Civil War items, 1800s knives, and many other antiques, including Native American projectile points dating to the Archaic period, were some of the prizes, too. There were also American Indian glass trade beads ranging from the 1700s-1890s.

Minelab Electronics and Garrett Metal Detectors seeded the grounds with tokens. Each of them gave out several nice prizes. The token prizes were a mystery until you approached the tent and handed it to one of their staff. Minelab had some excellent prizes like backpacks, hats, gloves, and T-shirts, as well as other items. They also raffled off a Minelab Equinox detector on the last day of the event. At the Minelab area, one could also spin the prize wheel to try their chance at winning some lovely items, too. Garrett had tokens seeded for their Pro-Pointers, gloves, hats, and other gear on each day of the hunt. Also, Nokta gave out a free carry bag and a hat to everyone at the event, plus they donated a couple of their Legends for free giveaways. Their staff were on site and eager to help make everyone's hunting



experience a more successful one.

Although Minelab, Garrett, and Nokta had excellent giveaways, the huge hunt fields that one can search for prize tokens is what brings detectorists to this event. In the fields, tokens were buried and scattered abroad. One side of the token reads "TF6," while the obverse side has a number stamped. The





*One of several huge seeded hunt fields is shown above. Among the coins and relics planted were numerous tokens redeemable for prizes and cash, including several for a \$1,000 payout.*

number on the token represents a predetermined prize. The fun didn't end when detectorists found tokens; the thrill of what they may have found lingered with them until they left the field to trade them in.

Finding a gold coin, even at a seeded hunt, is a "bucket lister" for many people who metal detect. It was exciting and enthralling to hear Connie Puckett tell her story about her gold coin. She didn't know she had found one of these tokens in the field until she approached the tent for the token exchange. She traded her token for a \$2.50 gold piece. Neither Butch nor I found one, so it looks like we will have to keep searching for that elusive item.

Minelab displayed several of their newest detectors and a tune-up area to help folks with minor issues. For example, Dan Cassidy lost his water/dust cap on the headphone connection for his Minelab Equinox 800. Debbie Smikoski and crew were eager to assist Dan, and had his Nox 800 quickly repaired.

When not in the field looking for treasure, YouTube influencer Gypsy

Jewels was at the Garrett tent answering questions, signing autographs, and talking about her upcoming book, *Just Digging It: A Beginner's Guide to Metal Detecting*. Whether you are new to detecting, need a refresher, or want to earn an additional advantage, this book should help anyone eager to learn more about the metal detecting hobby.

There were other YouTube celebrities at the Treasure Fest, too. The History Seekers folks had an excellent display, selling

metal detectors, among other items. They provided many answers to countless questions and left people satisfied with their responses. Both Heath and Kelly are real gems to the metal detecting world and are always willing to help out with the needs of others. Their familiarity with the historical aspects of the Civil War is very impressive. Other YouTube personalities and some of Minelab's "Detexperts," such as Lucky and Leigh, attended the event. Lucky was gracious enough to auction off his green "lucky" T-shirt and donated the proceeds to the John 3:16 Ministries.



*A free bouncy house was provided for the kids. However, we can't vouch for the age of the big kid seen here leaving the attraction.*





Their enthusiasm and friendly smiles are contagious with whomever they meet.

*American Digger*® magazine also had an eye-pleasing display. It allowed anyone to pick up past and present copies of their publication, T-shirts, assorted books, and Civil War grab bags, among other items of interest. Marketing Director Debbie Schiffer-Blades was also at the booth and helped many people purchase yearly subscriptions with either a hardcopy magazine or, if desired, one could obtain an annual subscription with the online PDF version. Many detectorists stopped by to chat with Butch and Debbie and left with smiles because of their friendliness and willingness to promote such a fantastic hobby.

Many thanks to Sam Johnson, Brandon Sutton, and Ka-Do-Ha Indian Village's excellent staff. Treasure Fest Six would not have occurred if it weren't for them all. Treasure Fest is an enormous event and requires a lot of work and attention to detail for all the pieces to fit together nicely. The staff's dedication to the metal detecting hobby and their diligent efforts made this hunt not only a fun event but a successful one, too.

So, what do you say? Let's make next year's Treasure Fest an even bigger event. Join the detecting community for a fun and exciting weekend and walk away with some excellent treasures and long-lasting friendships that will keep you coming back year after year. Tickets are on sale now for next year's event. You can purchase them by calling the Ka-Do-Ha Indian Village at (870) 285-3736. Karen and her staff are ready to help you prepare for next year's event. Come join in on the fun; you will be satisfied.



**John Freeland** has been detecting for over four decades. His first detector was a Sears Roebuck found tucked away at a yard sale. He now swings both the more advanced Minelab Manticore and the Equinox 900. He has a BA in creative writing and enjoys writing about anything involving metal detecting. If you want to read more of John's treasure hunting stories, please go to [www.freelandsadventures.com](http://www.freelandsadventures.com) to see what other riches he has found. He also writes about fishing, hiking, and traveling the United States and most recently, as a columnist for *American Digger*®.



Among the hunt sponsors set up at the event were, l-r: *American Digger*® magazine, Nokta, Garrett, Minelab, and The History Seekers. At the top of the page, tokens were exchanged for relics, coins, and more at the main tent.