

From Mark Schuessler

Hello to everyone.

My first thought was to say that I hope everyone is done with this lingering miserable winter. As I started writing this I see that several parts of the country are getting a dose of white stuff yet again. Maybe we in the northern areas will get a week or two of summer in August! This winter was a real eye opener for many parts of the country that rarely if ever see any "winter". Our winter here in Western New York State was not exceptionally bad it was just exceptionally cold for long periods of time. The roads and driveways are a real mess and the frost went deep in the ground. I thought it was really nice of us to "share" the winter with everyone else this year! So far this year has been pretty quiet as far as any new legislation or closures are concerned. At least we have not heard of any. If you have then don't keep it to yourself. We cannot fight something that we do not know about.

The only issue that has come up recently is with the bad portrayal of the hobby in a Farmers Insurance commercial. If you have not seen it I will briefly recap. A separate email will go out shortly with all the details and my thoughts. A detectorist is shown on a beach stealing a gold necklace off a sleeping man. There are some in the hobby who see it as funny. I do not. I see it as an indoctrination of the uninformed public to beware the evil metal detector guy as he will steal from you. The most disturbing part is that the management of farmers insurance (no capitalization intended) do not even have enough courtesy or credibility to respond to complaints. Many phone calls to the corporate office have received a run around or no return calls to the messages left. Letters to the management have gone unanswered. More in my separate email.

Our website is still not up to par. My apologies for it not being updated. I had hoped by now to have the applications available to fill out right on the site but that has not happened. Getting it back in action has now become a top priority. The forum is also down as the site that was hosting it has apparently disappeared. We do have a facebook page that is slowly growing. I will begin using that immediately to post info until the website is back up and running as it should be. There are many facebook junkies out there. Feel free to post or add interesting metal detecting info to it.

There is a movement beginning to bring the entire community together. On Presidents day I was invited to attend a meeting in Chicago. This was attended by a dozen representatives from the metal detecting community. It was on short notice so many were unable to make it. There were manufacturers, distributors, an archaeologists and even a lobbyist. The meeting was out together by Minelab to hear from Dr. Norman Palmer. He is one of the architects of the English Portable Antiquities Scheme and was in Chicago for an event. He took time out to meet with us. He presented a very informative slide show on the system. Giving background info along with a general understanding of how the system functions and adapts. At the end of the meeting a brief discussion took place concerning the US situation. "Where do we go from here?" was the question. It was cut short by a winter storm hitting the area so everyone scattered to hit the airport or the road. Mine was the road and it was not pleasant! It was agreed that more meetings need to take place. We must get organized so all concerns are working together. Without it we will keep on this path of a constant fragmented fight to keep the hobby alive.

England took the steps a couple decades ago to avoid that. On the other end of the scale the countries of Bulgaria and Russia have gone the other direction. Russia has virtually outlawed detecting this past year. If you don't think it could happen here all you need to do is look at the gross violations of the law and the constitution that are being perpetrated by the government and the courts everyday. Do you think that a little item like metal detecting would be even a burp to them?

We are working on moving into the 21st century (pun intended). Shortly we be holding our first internet meeting of officers. In addition we are hoping to use this to actually meet with clubs around the country. A representative of the FMDAC can be on a computer or screen or whatever the club sets up and talk live with the club. This is an effort to make better use of technology and also to make better use of the members funds.

In keeping with that issue we will not be holding a traditional convention this year. At best the officers will be getting together to hold a board meeting. We will be discussing the future of the conventions as they have been held. Attendance has dropped off over the years so we will reevaluate the whole affair. We may go to every other year. And or hold it in conjunction with another event. One of the issues with putting on one is that it takes a lot of resources to put it all together. If a member club has a good location or event in their area and would like to host it then let us know. It is much easier when we have someone in the local area to do the legwork. Should we hold it along with an existing event we would have to make changes to coincide with and work with that event. We will let you know as soon as we make a determination.

A situation has just now, as I write this, come to light in Massachusetts. Seems that the Parks department is rewriting its rules. Apparently there was a comment period and some public meetings in the fall. One of the items that has been changed (it is not in effect yet) is that metal detecting is now being banned. We have no further info and the Northern region director, John Howard is checking into it. Once we research it we will send out that info.

Now on a positive note. A fellow detectorist by the name of Heath Jones is running for an Alabama state house seat. He talked on American Digger Relic Roundup a few weeks ago. Obviously you cannot vote for him unless you are in the Alabama 39th district but you can wish him well. He does have a facebook page you can check out. He has no primary challenger so will be going up against the incumbent in November.

Mark Schuessler
President

ED BURKE NATIONAL V.P.

On a recent trip to the Gettysburg battlefield, a trip I make several times a year, I once again, viewed the sign that all of us in the TH'ing hobby dread. It was a bold and rather large sign that stated: NO RELIC HUNTING. Although it was not the first time to see this message, the feeling in my gut was still the same. Unfortunately this trend is growing. More and more of our choice hunting sites are being taken from us. It is the goal of the FMDAC to work to preserve the right to rescue the metallic objects buried in these sites. It is however, your responsibility to obey the rules and regulations that are included in our code of ethics. We as a unit tend to blame others for the closing of areas that we like to detect. In reality, many of these sites have been scratched

because of careless practices of us, the treasure hunters.

It is therefore my goal to remind all of you that filling holes, closing gates, and in general treating your hunt sites with respect is the best means to prevent the elimination of these places. When you think about it, there would be no need for the FMDAC if we all used our heads.

Central Region

Been quiet in the Central Region lately. Still working on the old problems with not much happening in the way of solutions yet. Eddie Black is still working hard in Louisville trying to get the parks opened back up for detecting. I have been in contact with a couple of new clubs about joining the FMDAC. If you know of any clubs in your area that are not FMDAC member clubs let me know and I will give them a call, We can use all the help we can get. If you are having a problem in your area that we might be able to help with please let me know. We can't help if we don't know about the problem.

We will not be having a convention this year as we are trying to focus on getting back to protecting the hobby more than sponsoring a convention & hunt weekend. This does not mean that we will not have a convention next year. We are looking on combining our convention with another group such as a Civil War Relic Show or the GPAA Show to give our members more options for displays & seminars. If you know of a show happening next year let me know so we can check them out to see if we can combine with them.

The Central Region is sponsoring a day of the Southern Indiana Treasure Fest in June. If you would like information about the hunt contact me at dmhayes61@sbcglobal.net or phone 740-252-1322 and I will send you the hunt info.

Good Hunting,
Don Hayes
Central Region Director FMDAC

Treasury

The treasury is doing fine and is slowly building. One message and reminder from Jill is to send your membership applications and renewals to the membership chairman Mike and Sue Race. Their address is on the applications and on the website.

Jill McFeeders
Treasurer