

The Scoop News
1161 Hillview Dr.
Hastings, MI 49058



The Scoop Southwest Michigan Seek and Search Club

March 2026 - Edition

When: The Third Tuesday of Each Month at 7 P.M.

Who: Meetings are open to the public

Where: Kalamazoo Rod & Gun Club
7533 North Sprinkle Road, Kalamazoo, MI 49004

How: From U.S. 131 come North to D Ave. take D Ave. East to North Sprinkle (road curves right and heads south), club is .25 miles on the right from int. of D. Ave. and Sprinkle.

Or

Take U.S. 131 South to D. Ave. exit, take D. Ave. East to N. Sprinkle (directions from here same as Northbound (above)).



February 2026 - Finds of the Month

JEWELRY



Entry: (w/ one entry must have over 50% of vote to win)

1. Small ring found in a "tot" lot, 14k gold – John M.

WINNER...#1 John M.

COIN



Entry: (w/ one entry must have over 50% of vote to win)

1. 1973 Lincoln Memorial Penny – Mike W.

WINNER...#1 Mike W.

FOB, BADGE, TOKEN



MOST UNUSUAL



Entry: (w/ one entry must have over 50% of vote to win)

1. Sterling silver pin retainer (pin back) - Mike W.

WINNER...#1 Mike W.

MISCELLANEOUS



Entries:

1. 25 cent blue chip casino token found in construction tear out – Rob K.
2. 1940 WWII era nickel found roll hunting – Mike W.
3. Special 232 retiring of penny coin display – John M.
4. 3 Ring 50 cal. Bullet found at Goodwill – Dakota P.
5. \$10 2017 Stare note received at grocery store – Tim T.

WINNER...#3 John M.



February Meeting

- FEATURE RAFFLE:
Slabbed 2 cent piece!!!
- Reminder:
March is Chili cook off!!

Prize for 1st
and 2nd place



Miscellaneous category for FOM - Over for year

With the beginning of daylight savings time (March 8th), the Miscellaneous category is officially over until November 1st for this year.

FOM notes:

- All items must be found or acquired since the last meeting.
- Multiples must be found in the same hole.
- One entry per category per member.
- Must be a paid member to enter find of the month.
- Write your name on the back of the entry slip.
- Do not look at names on the back of find of the month slips.
- Check with the President or Vice President if you have any questions as to what category to put an item in.

Newsletter Tip!!!

If you see text in blue that has this in front of it: "https" it is a web-link you can click on in the digital newsletter or you can manually type it in to your web browser's URL field to learn more about a particular subject.



***Raffle Tickets must be purchased before the beginning of the meeting.**

**You don't have to be a member to purchase tickets for the Silver Dollar or the 50/50 raffles.

SWMSS CLUB MEMBER BENEFITS

1. Find of the Month Entries
 2. Find of the Year Entry
 3. Door Prizes
 4. All Raffle's & the Feature Raffle
 5. Newsletter, Mail and / or Email
 6. Participate in Seeded Hunts
 7. * Voting Rights
 8. * Fish Bowl Prize (drawing every meeting)
 9. Perfect Attendance (Jan. through Dec.) prize
 10. To Sell or Trade at the "Buy, Sell & Trade Night".
- Exception:** *These items are not extended to associate members.

An "Associate" membership is extended to a paid member's spouse (*must be legally married*), their children and grandchildren. Anyone 18 years and older are considered an adult and will need to purchase their own membership.

A new member can enter their finds in the "Find of the Month" after 1 full month's membership.**

A "new" member is someone that has never been a member before.

Renewal Memberships are due before the meeting starts to participate in the "Find of the Month".

Club Membership is \$25 for the calendar year (January Through December).

Members, Please, "Sign in" at every club meeting. The "Sign In Book" is used to keep record of perfect attendance for the year. The sign in book is on the table with the name tags.

Be sure to renew your membership before the meeting starts to get in on the drawings and raffles.

**Please note:

To be guaranteed a photo in the slide show for "Find of the Month", there is a **6:45** cut off time.

Please be mindful of this as Anne and Bradley our photographers most months have 60+ photos to take and incorporate into the slide show for judging. We need to maintain this cutoff if we are to finish in a timely manner and ensure everyone has a chance to compete.

*** *If any club members would like to be added to the SWMSS Club Facebook group, please contact Mike Walker or Brian Tobias*

You Don't Know Everything - Preserving your finds

This month wraps up the "You Don't Know Everything" series with my favorite topic that seems to be a commonly debated topic on almost every discussion group format in this hobby, how to handle or in (better words take care of and or preserve) your precious dug treasures.

The common topic is how to handle coins. This series in my mind actually started after watching one of the YouTube dectorists I look up to the most as being just a good source of history and expertise on the subject of detecting. I in fact personally met him at this year's Digstock event a few weeks ago. Great guy, really. However, he's started doing something that I thought was a one-off mishap the first time I watched him do it a few weeks ago on one of his videos. Immediately after digging an old copper (I think it was a Matron head) on a Vermont mountaintop at an old colonial to early 1800s site...he whipped out a spray container of water and started spraying off the coin and rubbing it????!! He got it wet right off the bat...appalling at best. Now some of this is tongue in cheek so please don't think I'm being judgmental, he dug it, he now owns it, he can do whatever he wants with it. You can also go buy a brand-new Ford 150 and drive it out of the dealership and into a concrete wall, but why would you?

My point with this article is you can do whatever you want with your finds...but if you don't want to damage them or at least keep them in the best possible shape for future generations to admire, then there are different things to keep in mind about different objects. I'm going to break this down by material and object type as best as I can:

Silver/Gold coins, and silver/gold in general:

I know, you just opened the hole and the sun strikes the reeded edge of a shiny round treasure in the bottom of the plug, silver, or better yet GOLD!!!! behold, the magic coin, and the first thought that runs through almost anyone's mind is, "I must know what it is, what the date is!" STOP, unless the dirt that it came out of is sand and falls away naturally, you will scratch this rubbing it dry. Recommendation, place it in a padded finds box and leave it until you get home to clean finds, but if you must, carry a spray bottle and spray until water pools, shake off and spray again. If you can't see what you need to at this point, just store and take home where you can submerge it in a mix of dish soap (mild detergent) and warm water. Anything other than doing this is definitely going to create at very least micro scratches. If you are fine with this, then rub away. Silver and gold are relatively soft metals prone to scratches by silica particles in soil, nothing you can do about it; they are just going to scratch if you dry rub them, period. You can do things like dip these in lemon juice or vinegar and while it will clean off the coins well, the acid in such liquids is still going to strip off toning to some extent and if you don't want this, don't use acids. I have used MS70 (mild chemically base detergent) on silver with a cotton swab soaked in it and gently rolling over the surface, as long as there is no dirt this will work to further pull micro deposits off the coins. I'd not do this on any non-dug coin personally because anything mechanically opens the door to scratches.

Copper/Bronze coins:

Copper while quick to form an oxidized coating falls prey to chemicals, such as those used in fertilizers tend to hyper accelerate that process eventually replaces the once strong sharp surface of the copper coin with the chemical replacement due to oxidation. This remaining CU₂O (Copper Oxide) and all its various forms is the actual detail you see on the coin's surface, the minute you introduce water or scrub this coin you will have removed detail. That having been said, a lot of folks lightly brush or pick off the dirt and leave the coin at this stage and no more. What works best (if you must "clean" these further) is to use rubbing alcohol; this will actually pull out moisture from the coin. You can lightly use a cotton swab soaked in rubbing alcohol and roll over the surface to remove dust/dirt as well. The thing to keep in mind is with old copper coins, etc. less is more, and mechanical methods will strip away detail. Know that going in and decide for yourself how much you want to do to these relics. Please just don't get really old "fuzzy" surfaced copper coins wet with a spray bottle. Bronze coins are much more forgiving.

Nickel:

Nickel is a fairly hard metal to a point, however the longer this material is in the ground the more it oxidizes, Liberty and Shield nickels are a good example of this. These nickels rarely come out of the ground looking very nice. Again, I'd use methods similar to the above for copper but if the surface looks stable and you've got just the "red" dust look to a liberty or buffalo nickel (and other objects) you can soak these in alcohol and then take 0000 steel wool or an SOS pad and lightly rub red off fairly easy, then soak in alcohol again and pat dry. WARNING: do this only if you know it isn't a rare date coin, etc. This is only a technique of "I want it legible and don't care if it gets scratched, yes even 0000 steel wool will leave micro scratches. Never use acids such as vinegar as these while removing the oxidation will pit the coin's surface.

**Heavily Oxidized
Buffalo Nickel**



**Pitting on a
Jefferson Nickel**



You Don't Know Everything - Preserving your finds - Cont'd

Iron:

Iron can be a subjective topic as far as relics and preservation. Some folks like to just power wash off the dirt from a horseshoe, axe head, horse bit, etc. and than maybe bang off loose rust with a hammer (carefully). This is fine if you want that very rustic look but unless you bake the moisture out of it on low heat in an oven and then dip it in paraffin wax it is still going to deteriorate, especially in an environment it can pull in moisture and be exposed to air. With iron it is really best to do one of three things:

1.) on newer "non-bubbled" iron items you can soak it in white vinegar, I know it doesn't sound like that would work but trust me it does and well. On larger items or items that are super corroded this is not the best method as the acid tends to keep working long after you've taken it out of the solution and inevitably you end up losing large portions of the item and this opens up the possibility to more corrosion. Either way it is best to after getting the desired cleaning from the vinegar (and a wire brush to removed any lose corrosion, try soaking in distilled water to dilute the vinegar then baking in an oven to drive out any remaining moisture then seal with wax.

2.) some folks have a lot of luck soaking the item in EvapoRust. This I've not done but have seen very good results. 30 minute soaks are recommended for light corrosion and 4 hours to overnight for heavily rusted items. I'm guessing an axe head from 150 years ago will take the later. They company claims that it will not eat paint even (which is surprising) so it claims to be non-caustic. As with any chemical treatment it is best to monitor the process along the way. When completed with this process use the same process as method 1.) above to finish the preservation.

3.) the last method and the one I prefer is electrolysis. Electrolysis is the process of passing low voltage current through a electrolytic solution into the object you wish to remove corrosion from. This is done by connecting the negative end of a 12 volt power source to object to be cleaned and the positive end to a sacrificial anode (like a length of rebar). This is all done in a tank full of water mixed with borax soap (sodium carbonate) at one tablespoon for each gallon of water. You can hang the item in the solution so it doesn't touch the anode by running the power supply wire to (out of the water) to connect to a length of copper wire that is supporting the item. Caution: never use stainless steel as the anode and always do this in a well ventilated (preferably outside your home) area and keep away from open flames. This process naturally splits H2O into Oxygen and Hydrogen, albeit small amounts but better safe than sorry. When the process is complete use a stiff steel brush under a hose to remove the black iron oxide that will have built up and then again follow the preservation steps from method 1 above. It is best to check the process often but larger objects take longer than smaller most larger items you'll want to leave working overnight. A diagram of a electrolysis setup is on the next page. Also note, you can use a 12 volt car or motorcycle battery charger as your power source but if it is a smart charger (most are today) you'll need to hookup a dead 12 volt battery in parallel so that the smart battery thinks it is charging something to work. You can get an old school "dumb" charger still but they are harder to come by these days.

Brass:

Brass is one of those items that develops a fine looking thick green patina after a long time. How you clean this generally depends on if you want to preserve that lovely green patina. Generally you can wash these items off without too much damage. Prolonged soaking or too much mechanically cleaning can eat into brass and remove the patina.

I like to clean my brass items off in a ultrasonic cleaner with dish detergent mixed in. The caution here is never put anything with patina in an ultrasonic cleaner laying on the bottom of the tank or in the included metal basket. The vibration of item rubbing against the tank or basket will eat the patina off fairly quickly. Best to put the item in a secondary container made of plastic filled with the same solution as the tank then lay the hole container with item in the tank. The ultrasonic waves will still move through the water within the secondary container and clean the item.

If you don't have an ultrasonic cleaner, warm water and a soft brush work just as well just don't ever use a metal brush on these as it will tear into the patina. Of course if you want to shine the brass up and that isn't an issue break out the wire brush and rotary tools.

Pewter, Zinc, Lead, Pot metal (old cap guns):

I use the same methods for these as brass but will often soak these in a solution of 50% apple cider (white works as well in 5%) to 50% water overnight to remove the white oxidation on those items. **NOTE: Never do this with old civil war and older lead bullets if you want to keep the white patina.** Those items I would sparingly wash in warm water and lightly brush the dirt off with a toothbrush. Some folks won't even get their old led wet and opt to pick or brush off the dirt.

Note: Diamond coated dental drill bits in a pin vise work well to pick out stubborn white concreted oxidation from these items but it takes skill and patience as to not scratch the metal below. It is a skill worth learning but best to practice first on some junk pieces to get the feel for it.

You Don't Know Everything - Preserving your finds - Cont'd

Here are some links (click photos) to different detail level cleaning tools I personally use, there is a tool for every item really so experiment on items that are not valuable (or valuable to you) first.

I typically use the pencils for detailed cleaning on old coppers and old copper and brass suspender clips, buttons etc. and some of the brushes to do a light final cleaning on items. Match the bristle material with what you are cleaning to avoid scratches. For example don't use a steel brush on copper or brass as it will scratch those and most likely tear off patina:



Le Crayon a Andre - Pencils



Composite Cleaning Pencils



Pixiss Scratch Brushes

At the end of the day, they are your coins or relics; you can do what you want. Realistically most coins that are dug are not worth that much and definitely even the rare dates are never as valuable as non-dug coins, just a sad reality. So is your 1944 wheat cent going to drastically decrease in value if you put it in a rock tumbler, not really. It was worth a cent to begin with. Always error on the side of caution if you care about preserving any find and research before committing to cleaning. Here is a great article that goes into additional methods and more detail of cleaning: <https://focusspeed.com/tips-cleaning-older-coins-tokens/>

Electrolysis Setup:

