

Odds and Ends

Garrett Pro Pointer Saves the Day!

The Sunday before Mardi Gras is not a great time to go metal detecting in uptown New Orleans. No Parking, parades, no parking, too many people, no parking, crazy people and did I mention: NO PARKING!

Anyway, there I was one block off Napoleon Avenue in the 4500 block of Perrier Street. One block ahead, floats were rolling by, people were screaming for beads and cars were parked bumper to bumper on each side of the street. I had to reach out and fold back my side view mirrors just to get by.

It was noon and I was looking for a distraught couple from Natchez, Mississippi who had called me earlier that morning, when I saw a tall young man waving at me frantically. It was Robert. On the porch behind him pacing back and forth was Mattie, her arms folded, shoulders slumped and she looked like she had been crying. Quite a contrast to the festivities a block away.

I met Mattie, then Robert, five hours earlier at 7:00 a.m. after they found me on the internet. That's when my phone rang. They were desperate. Three phone calls desperate: 7:00 , 7:15, 7:45. I am not an early riser but listened to their story. They were in from Natchez for Mardi Gras and Mattie, worried about her new 3.5 carat engagement ring that was a tad loose, gave it to her fiancée, Robert, for safe-keeping while at the parades. Back on the porch at Perrier street, Robert explained he had somehow dropped the ring. It bounced off the edge of the wooden porch, he said, and arced thru the air into a densely planted garden about five feet square. In my groggy mind's eye I could see it all in slow motion: the drop, the bounce, the slow arc through the air and then being sucked into the garden in some small, green, leafy secret spot. Search as they may, neither he, Mattie or any of their friends could find it. Could I find it with one of my metal detectors he asked? I said I was sure I could. Then he warned me,

there were pipes and wires and metal stuff and could my detectors handle that? No problem, I said but then explained I couldn't get there until noon because of another task I had to get out of the way. Sleep! I had been up late the night before and was bushed. To help, Robert called me back at 7:45 to make sure I was coming at noon.

So, there I was in the midst of Mardi Gras madness with a truck full of specialized detectors and every small coil imaginable wondering where the devil I was going to park. Robert had called me a few minutes earlier to reassure me he had saved a spot. And there it was, a driveway!! I politely explained to Robert driveways are not parking spots they are bait for tow truck drivers waiting for some desperate out of towners to park in them and then...KABOOM...the auto pound and a \$250.00 fine. He assured me he had taken care of it. So, I parked. On Mardi Gras. In a driveway. Surely, I had taken leave of my senses.

Then Robert showed me the scene of the crime...or the bumble...the aforementioned small garden. My God, it was the Heart of Darkness!! Thickly planted cast iron plants, variegated liriopsis, bushes, pansies and monkey grass, it all surrounded a fiberglass sugar kettle fountain!! And yes, copper spigots, copper pipes underground, the fountain, extension cords, underground wires and Mardi Gras lights strung throughout, a metallic nightmare!

I turned on my Shadow X-5 mounted with a 7 inch coil and it sounded like it was on crack! Interference everywhere! I settled it down, searched where I could and then switched to a 5 inch coil. Still too big. Too many plants, not enough space!! I looked at Mattie, so sad, and was determined to figure out how to do this. Then, eureka! I had it: my Garrett Pro Pointer!! It would only search a very small, shallow area at a time but hey, this ring had to be on the surface somewhere or hung up in the branches of a bush, between a plant, down in the roots of the cast iron plants or eaten by a frog. Frog? Well, that's what was going through my mind at the time: the ring slowly arcing through the air, a frog flicking out his tongue at the sparkly delight and then? Indigestion? I snapped out of it and began searching with the little hand probe. I found nails, lots of nails, broken pieces of pot metal, a chain from a hanging basket, foil, old iron nail heads and metal of every imaginable description. Every single piece of metal that ever had

fallen in that garden, I found it!! I was terrific!! Except, I couldn't find the ring. Drat!

So, I sat on the porch and went back to the movie in my head. The ring falling, bouncing, curling thru the air, hitting the leaves of the cast iron plants and sliding down towards the kettle. Sliding down towards the kettle? Yes, sliding down towards the kettle!! Back in the garden, I pulled back the cast iron plants until they screamed (you have to remember I am still in the movie in my head, plants can scream.) and began probing into their most intimate spots. I got a healthy buzz only to find another iron nail head. Then, I saw it! A small hole between the mound of rocks and dirt the sugar kettle was sitting on and the roots of the cast iron plant. It was the kind of place toads (read frogs) often hide in. I shoved in my Pro Pointer and BUZZZZZZZ!!!! I stuck in my finger and immediately felt a small round circle. Pulling it out, there on the tip of my finger was the ring!! And what a ring it was! A beautiful emerald cut diamond with a brilliant cut base.



On the sidewalk, Mattie was looking pretty glum, resolved to the fact her ring was forever lost. I walked over to her and asked if she would hold the

“test ring” I had brought with me because it was interfering with my detector. As she held out her hand I dropped her ring into her hand and she gasped. She smiled. She shouted! Robert came running with a : “ Did you find it? “ Yes, I said, “ I found it.” I would have never thought to look for a lost ring with an electronic pin-pointer but special situations call for special equipment and the Garrett Pro Pointer hit the nail on the head...several nails, in fact...but also the ring. It took one hour and twenty three minutes from turning on my first detector to handing the ring to Mattie. What a Mardi Gras! Now back to the house for a nap.



